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BY ELEANOR URQUHART

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IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH, FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

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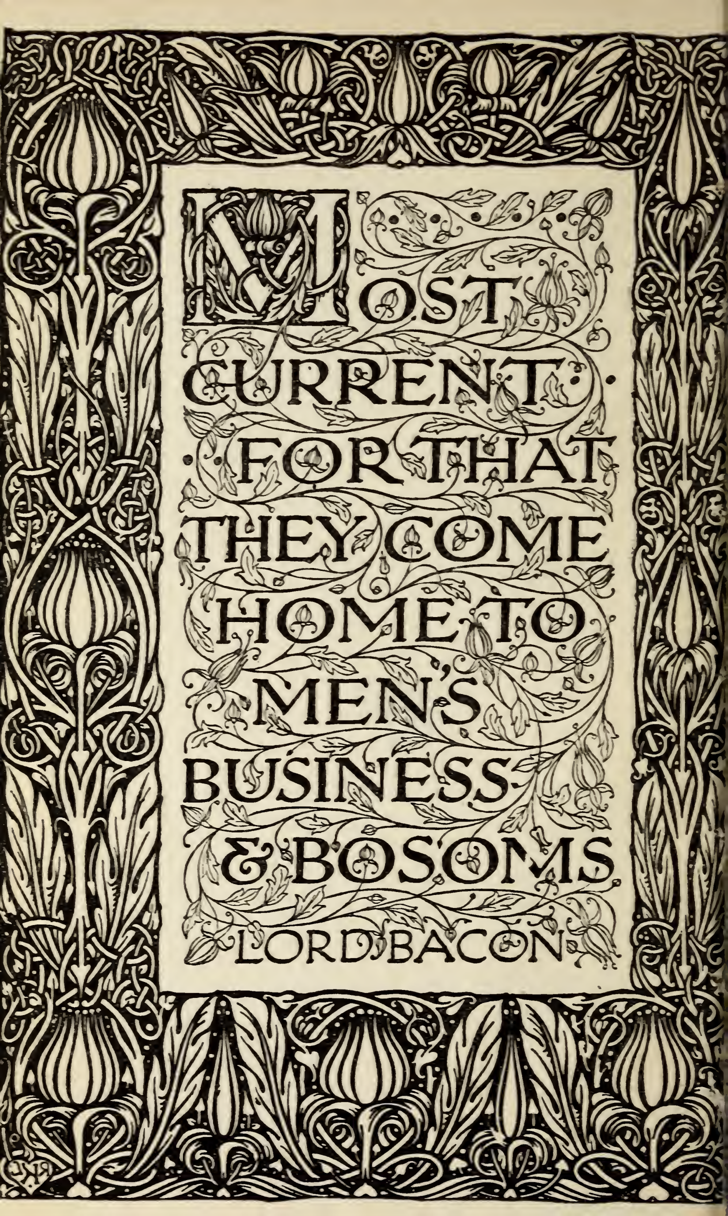

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MANUAL of ENGLISH LITERATURE

by Prof: GEORGE LILLIE CRAIK

(with some new additions)

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE modes of literary criticism have altered considerably since this manual was written. Historians of our verse and prose now incline either to be more personal in the appreciation and interpretation of their matter, or to be bolder and more general in their treatment, which is directed to the master-notes of thought and style or to the evolution of literary forms. This book frankly deals with writers in groups and periods, or one by one in their chronological order; though sometimes the development of a form is traced with great ability and knowledge, and main influences are by no means left unperceived. For the common purposes of retrospect and reference the method is excellent.

No attempt has been made to remodel the volume, therefore. Certain gaps have been filled up, and a brief note on the later developments of the nineteenth century has been added. The nature of a transition has occasionally been emphasized, some of the longer and more familiar quotations have given way to others, some out-of-date linguistic matter has been removed, and some authors have been condensed to make room for new matter. In short, little more has been done than to extend the scope of Professor Craik's work, on his own lines and as far as possible according to his own standards.

The successive labours and discoveries of critics like Lamb, Hazlitt, Swinburne, Furnival and others have made it necessary to add many names to the description of the Elizabethan drama; while a similar devotion to the lyric of the same period has rescued many exquisite songs from oblivion. The valuable work of the various early text societies has thrown much new light on the earlier part of our literary history. Many figures that seemed of the first importance to the writer of this manual have considerably lost their significance; and the space originally allotted to them has been diminished to suit the altered values of the twentieth century.

The work as it stands is open to still further revision; but it is hoped it will serve its purpose as a compact working manual and familiar literary guide-book, not too academic in character for the everyday reader.

The following is a list of the works of George Lillie Craik :—

The Pursuit oi Knowledge under Difficulties, 2 vols., 1830–1 and later editions ; The same illustrated by Female Examples, supplementary vol., 1847 (Knight's *Monthly Volumes*) ; The New Zealanders, 1830 ; Paris and its Historical Scenes, 1831 ; The Pictorial History of England, 4 vols., 1837–1841 and later editions (in collaboration with C. MacFarlane) ; History of British Commerce (a part of the above, with additions, published separately), 1844 ; Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England from the Norman Conquest, 6 vols., 1844–5 ; A Compendious History of English Literature and the English Language, 2 vols., 1861, 2nd ed., 1864 ; abridged version, Manual of English Literature, 1862, and several later editions ; 9th ed. with additions by H. Craik, 1883 ; Spenser and his Poetry, 3 vols., 1845 (Knight's *Weekly Volume*) ; Bacon and his Writings, 3 vols., 1846–7 ; (Knight's *Weekly Volume*) ; Romance of the Peerage, 4 vols., 1848–50 ; Outlines of the History of the English Language, 1851, 5th ed. 1864 ; The English of Shakespeare illustrated by a Philological Commentary on Julius Cæsar, 1856.

Editor of English Causes Célèbres ; or, Reports of Remarkable Trials (Knight's *Miscellanies*), 1840 ; contributor to the *Penny Magazine*, the *Penny Cyclopædia*, and the *Biographical Dictionary* published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

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The present volume consists of so much of a larger work recently published on the same subject as seemed sufficient to make a convenient and comprehensive text-book for schools and colleges, and to supply all the information needed by students in preparing themselves for the Civil Service and other competitive examinations. The concluding section is nearly all that has been added.

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MANUAL OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE CELTIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

THE probability is, that the various races inhabiting the British islands when they first became known to the civilized world were mostly, if not all, of Celtic speech. Even in the parts of the country that were occupied by the Caledonians, the Picts, and the Belgian colonists, the oldest topographical names, the surest evidence that we have in all cases, are all, or with a very few exceptions, Celtic, either of Brythonic or of Gaelic form. And then there are the great standing facts of the existence to this day of a large Cymric population in South Britain, and of a still larger Gaelic-speaking population in North Britain and in Ireland. No other account of these Celtic populations, or at least of the Welsh, has been given, than that, as their own traditions and records are unanimous in asserting, they are the remnants of the races by which the two islands were occupied when they first attracted the attention of the Romans about half a century before the commencement of the Christian era.

And both the Welsh and the Irish possess a large mass of literature in their native tongues, much of which has been printed, in great part no doubt of comparatively modern production, but claiming, some of it, in its substance if not exactly in the very form in which it now presents itself, an antiquity transcending that of any other native literature of which the country can boast.

Neither the Welsh nor the Irish language and literature, however, can with any propriety be included in a history of English literature and of the English language. The Celtic words, or words of Celtic extraction, that are found in the language, be they some hundreds in number, or be they one or two thousands, are clearly of different stock. They are products of another seed that have shot up here and there with the later crop from the imperfectly cleared soil; or they are fragments of another mass which have chanced to come in contact with the body of the language pressed upon by its weight, or blown upon it by the wind, that have adhered to it or become imbedded in it. At any rate, in point of fact the English can at most be said to have been powdered or sprinkled with a little Celtic. Whatever may be the number of words which it has adopted, whether from the ancient Britons or from their descendants, the Welsh, they are only single scattered words. No considerable department of the English dictionary is Welsh. No stream of words has flowed into the language from that source. The two languages have in no sense met and become one. They have not mingled as two rivers do when they join and fall into the same channel. There has been no chemical combination between the Teutonic and the Celtic elements, but only more or less of a mechanical intermixture.

Nevertheless the Celtic influence has been strong as regards the emotional quality and the traditional legends of English literature. Two great tides of Celtic migration at least broke over England. The first migration, of Gaelic or Goedelic tribes, drove before it and gradually absorbed the original Neolithic inhabitants of the land. The second migration, of Brythons, brought settlers to Kent and the Thames valley, among the latest comers being the Belgæ. The pure Brythons later on became isolated in Cornwall, Cumbria, and Wales, driven Westward by the new invaders.

A passionate love of nature in her wilder aspects and a certain sweetness of lamentation are characteristics of our literature that seem part of its Celtic heritage. The great Arthurian story begins for us in the stories of Gaels and Cymry.

As the forms of the original English alphabetical characters are the same as those of the Irish, it is probable that it was from Ireland the English derived their first knowledge of letters. There was certainly, however, very little literature in the country before the arrival of Augustine, in the end of the sixth century. Augustine is supposed to have established schools at Canterbury ; and about a quarter of a century afterwards, Sigebert, king of the East Angles, who had spent part of his early life in France, is stated by Bede to have, upon his coming to the throne, founded an institution for the instruction of the youth of his dominions similar to those he had seen abroad. The schools planted by Augustine at Canterbury were afterwards greatly extended and improved by his successor, Archbishop Theodore, who obtained the see in 668. Theodore and his learned friend Adrian, Bede informs us, delivered instructions to crowds of pupils, not only in divinity, but also in astronomy, medicine, arithmetic, and the Greek and Latin languages. Bede states that some of the scholars of these accomplished foreigners were alive in his time, to whom the Greek and Latin were as familiar as their mother-tongue. Schools now began to multiply in other parts, and were generally to be found in all the monasteries and at the bishops' seats. Of these episcopal and monastic schools, that founded by Bishop Benedict in his abbey at Wearmouth, where Bede was educated, and that which Archbishop Egbert established at York, were among the most famous. But others of great reputation at a somewhat later date were superintended by learned teachers from Ireland. One was that of Maildulf at Malmesbury. At Glastonbury, also, it is related in one of the ancient lives of St. Dunstan, some Irish ecclesiastics had settled, the books belonging to whom Dunstan diligently studied. The northern parts of the kingdom, moreover, were indebted for the first light of learning as of religion to the missionaries from Iona, which was an Irish foundation.

For some ages Ireland was the chief seat of learning in Christian Europe; and the most distinguished scholars who appeared in other countries were mostly either Irish by birth or had received their education in Irish schools. We are informed by Bede that in his day, the earlier part of the eighth century, it was customary for his English fellow-countrymen of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, to retire for study and devotion to Ireland, where, he adds, they were all hospitably received, and supplied gratuitously with food, with books, and with instruction.[1] The glory of this age of Irish scholarship and genius is the celebrated Joannes Scotus, or Erigena, as he is as frequently designated,—either appellative equally proclaiming his true birthplace. He is supposed to have first made his appearance in France about the year 845, and to have remained in that country till his death, which appears to have taken place before 875. Erigena is the author of a translation from the Greek of certain mystical works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, which he executed at the command of his patron, the French king, Charles the Bald, and also of several original treatises on metaphysics and theology. His productions may be taken as furnishing clear and conclusive evidence that the Greek language was taught at this time in the Irish schools.

[1] *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 28.

The subtle speculations of Erigena exerted in many fields a very extraordinary influence on the philosophy of his own and of succeeding times. To his writings and translations may even be traced, it has been said, the introduction into the theology and metaphysics of Europe of the later Platonism of the Alexandrian school.

Early Latin Literature in Britain

When the South of Britain became a part of the Roman empire, the inhabitants, at least of the towns, seem generally to have adopted the Latin language and applied themselves to the study of the Latin literature. The diffusion among them of this new taste was one of the first means employed by their politic conquerors, as soon as they had fairly established themselves in the island, to rivet their dominion. Agricola, having spent the first year of his administration in establishing in the province the order and tranquillity which is the first necessity of the social condition, and the indispensable basis of all civilization, did not allow another winter to pass without beginning the work of thus training up the national mind to a Roman character. Tacitus informs us that he took measures for having the sons of the chiefs educated in the liberal arts, exciting them at the same time by professing to prefer the natural genius of the Britons to the studied acquirements of the Gauls, so that those who lately had disdained to use the Roman tongue now became ambitious of excelling in eloquence. In later times schools were no doubt established and maintained in all the principal towns of Roman Britain, as they were throughout the empire in general. There are still extant many imperial edicts relating to these public seminaries, in which privileges are conferred upon the teachers, and regulations laid down as to the manner in which they were to be appointed, the salaries they were to receive, and the branches of learning they were to teach. But no account of the British schools in particular has been preserved. It would appear, however, that, for some time at least, the older schools of Gaul were resorted to by the Britons who pursued the study of the law: Juvenal, who lived in the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, speaks, in one of his Satires, of eloquent Gaul instructing the pleaders of Britain. But already forensic acquirements must have become very general in the latter country and the surrounding regions, if we may place any reliance on the assertion which he makes in the next line, that in Thule itself people now talked of hiring rhetoricians to manage their causes.

It is somewhat remarkable that, while a good many names of natives of Gaul are recorded in connection with the last age of Roman literature, scarcely a British name of that period of any literary reputation has been preserved, if we except a few which figure in the history of the Christian Church. The poet Ausonius, who flourished in the fourth century, makes frequent mention of a contemporary British writer whom he calls Sylvius Bonus, and whose native name is supposed to have been Coil the Good; but of his works, or even of their titles or subjects, we know nothing. Of ecclesiastical writers in Latin belonging to the sixth century, the heresiarch Pelagius and his disciple Celestius, St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, with his friend Bishop Secundinus, and the poet Sedulius, are generally regarded as having been natives of the British islands.

Gildas, our earliest historian of whom anything remains, also wrote in Latin. His Welsh and Breton biographers do not agree in their accounts, but he was born at the beginning of the sixth century. In his youth Gildas is said to have gone over to Ireland, to have studied in the schools of the old national learning that still flourished there, and to have commenced his career as a bard, or composer of poetry in his native tongue. He was eventually, however, converted to Christianity, and became a zealous preacher of his new religion. The greater part of his life appears to have been spent in his native island; but at last he retired to Armorica, or Brittany, and, no doubt, died there. He is said to lie buried in the Cathedral of Vannes. Gildas is chiefly remembered by the work [1] commonly known as his *History* (Liber Querulus de Excidio Britanniæ). It consists principally of violent invectives directed against his own countrymen as well as their continental invaders; and throws at best a fitful, lurid light upon the obscure period to which they relate.

Nennius is another historian. He is said to have been a monk of Bangor, and to have escaped from the massacre of his brethren in 613. But his real date carries us nearer the end of the eighth century, and this story is pure legend. His *Historia Britonum*, though again of little service as downright history, is invaluable as an early literary document; and the appended genealogies are of considerable importance.[1] The book is a compilation from many different sources.

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[1] See the new translation of his writings by Prof. Hugh Williams of Bala, to which the 'Lives' referred to and a study of his works and life are added. (London: Society of Cymmrodorion.)

Wessex was a great centre of Latin literature. Daniel, bishop of Winchester (705–745), was a famous scholar. Ealdhelm was a still more distinguished student. Ealdhelm was of the stock of the kings of Wessex, and was initiated in Greek and Latin learning at the school in Kent presided over by the Abbot Adrian, who, like his friend Archbishop Theodore, appears to have been a native of Asia Minor, so that Greek was his native tongue. We are assured by one of his biographers that Ealdhelm could write and speak Greek like a native of Greece. He also early associated himself with the monastic brotherhood of Malmesbury. Among his studies are mentioned the Roman law, the rules of Latin prosody, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology. He wrote Latin prose and verse; especially delightful are his courteous and affectionate letters to abbesses and nuns; and some early English songs are also attributed to him.

But the English name of the times before the Norman Conquest that is most distinguished in literature is that of Bæda, or Bede, upon whom the epithet of "The Venerable" has been justly bestowed by the respect and gratitude of posterity. All that we have written by Bede is in the Latin language. He was born some time between the years 672 and 677, at Jarrow, a village near the mouth of the Tyne, in the county of Durham, and was educated in the neighbouring monastery of Wearmouth under its successive abbots Benedict and Ceolfrid. Northumbria was really the great centre of Latin learning. Benedict Biseop came north from Canterbury, and his enthusiasm made Wearmouth and Jarrow famous for their collections and their decorated libraries. Bede resided at Wearmouth, as he tells us himself, from the age of seven to that of twelve, during which time he applied himself with all diligence, he says, to the meditation of the Scriptures, the observance of regular discipline, and the daily practice of singing in the church. He was soon transferred to Jarrow monastery. "It was always sweet to me," he adds, "to learn, to teach, and to write." In his nineteenth year he took deacon's orders, and in his thirtieth he was ordained priest. From this date till his death, in 735, he remained in monastery, giving up his whole time to study and writing. His principal task was the composition of his celebrated *Ecclesiastical History of England*, which he brought to a close in his fifty-ninth year. It is our chief original authority for the earlier portion even of the civil history of the English nation. But Bede also wrote many other works, among which he has himself enumerated, in the brief account he gives of his life at the end of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, two books of Homilies, a Martyrology, a chronological treatise entitled *On the Six Ages*, a book on orthography, a book on the metrical art, and various other theological and biographical treatises. He likewise composed a book of hymns and another of epigrams. Most of these writings have been preserved, and have been repeatedly printed. It appears, from an interesting account of Bede's last hours by his pupil St. Cuthbert that he was engaged at the time of his death in translating St. John's Gospel into his native tongue. Among his last utterances to his affectionate disciples watching around his bed were some recitations in the English language: "For," says the account, "he was very learned in our songs; and, putting his thoughts into English verse, he spoke it with compunction." The centre of scholarship shifted later to York, which sent out Alcuin, the famous scholar, the friend of Charlemagne.

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[1] See on the question of Nennius and his disputed claims to the authorship of the *Historia Britonum*, the *Nennius Vindicatus* of Prof. Zimmer.

Another celebrated English churchman of this age was St. Boniface, originally named Winfrith, who was born in Devonshire about the year 680. Boniface is acknowledged as the Apostle of Germany, in which country he founded various monasteries, and was greatly instrumental in the diffusion both of Christianity and of civilization. He eventually became archbishop of Mentz, and was killed in East Friesland by a band of heathens in 755. Many of his letters to the popes, to the English bishops, to the kings of France, and to the kings of the various states of his native country, still remain, and are printed in the collections entitled *Bibliothecæ Patrum*. Latin learning in Mercia was represented by Felix of Crowland, who wrote a *Life of St. Guthlac*.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

English, in its most primitive form, was the language generally spoken by the barbaric invaders, who, upon the breaking up of the empire of the West in the fifth century, came over in successive throngs from the opposite continent, and, after a protracted struggle, acquired the possession and dominion of the principal portion of the province of Britain. They are stated to have consisted chiefly of Angles and Saxons. But, although it is usual to designate them rather by the general denomination of the Saxons, or Anglo-Saxons, it is probable that the Saxons were in reality only a section of the Angles. The *Angles*, of which term our modern *English* is only another form, appears to have been always recognized among themselves as the proper national appellation. They both concurred, Angles and Saxons alike, after their establishment in Britain, in calling their common country *Angle-land*, or *England*, and their common language *English*—that is, the language of the Angles,—as there can be little doubt it had been called from the time when it first became known as a distinct form of human speech. The term Anglo-Saxon means "English Saxon," *i.e.* as distinguished from the Saxons left on the mainland.

This English language, since become so famous, is ordinarily regarded as belonging to the Low-Germanic, or middle, group of the Gothic tongues. That is to say, it is classed with the Dutch and the Flemish, and the dialects generally of the more northern and low-lying part of what was anciently called Germany, under which name were included the countries that we call Holland and the Netherlands, as well as that to which it is now more especially confined. It appears to have been from this middle region, lying directly opposite to Britain, that the Angles and Saxons and other tribes by whom the English language was brought over to that island chiefly came. At any rate, they certainly did not come from the more elevated region of Southern Germany. Nor does the language present the distinguishing characteristics of a High-Germanic tongue. We are, at least in respect of language, more nearly akin to the Dutch and the Flemings than we are to the Germans. The invading bands by whom it was originally brought over to Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries were in all probability drawn in great part from the Scandinavian countries.

The English language is recorded to have been known by that name, and to have been the national speech of the same race, at least since the middle of the fifth century. It was then, as we have seen, that the first settlers by whom it was spoken established themselves in the country of which their descendants have ever since retained possession. Call them either Angles (that is, English) or Saxons, it makes no difference; it is clear that, whether or no the several divisions of the invaders were all of one blood, all branches of a common stock, they spoke substantially the same language, the proper name of which, as has been stated, was the *Anglish*, or *English*, as *England*, or *Angle-land* (the land of the Angles), was the name which the country received from its new occupants. And these names of *England* and *English* the country and the language have each retained ever since.

Nor can it be questioned that the same tongue was spoken by the same race, or races, long before their settlement in Britain. The Angles figure as one of the nations occupying the forest land of Germany in the picture of that country sketched by Tacitus in the first century of our era.

The most distinct record, however, of a language is afforded by what exists of it in a written form. Of the English language we have a continuous succession of written remains since the seventh century, and they afford us a record or representation of the language in which there is no gap. The movement of the language during this extended existence has been immense. No language ever ceases to move until it becomes what is called dead, which term, although commonly understood to mean merely that the language has ceased to be spoken, really signifies, here as elsewhere, that the spirit of life is gone out of it, which is indeed the unfailing sign of its ceasing to be used as an oral medium. It is only speaking that keeps a language alive; writing alone will not do it. That has no more than a conservative function and effect; the progressive power, the element of fermentation and change, in a language is its vocal utterance. We shall find that the English language, moving now faster, now slower, throughout the twelve or thirteen centuries over which our knowledge of it extends, although it has never been suddenly converted from one form into another, has yet within that space undergone at least *two* complete revolutions, or, in other words, presents itself to us in *three* distinct forms.

OLD ENGLISH

SOMETIMES CALLED *SAXON*, OR *ANGLO-SAXON*

Old English, 1100. Middle English, 1100–1500.
Modern English, 1500–1908.

THE English which the Angles and Saxons brought over with them from the Continent, when they came and took possession of the greater part of South Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, differed from the English that we now speak and write in two important respects. It was an unmixed language; and it was what is called a synthetic, in contradistinction to an analytic, language. Its vocables were all of one stock or lineage; and it expressed the relations of nouns and verbs, not by separate words, called auxiliaries and particles, but by terminational or other modifications,—that is, by proper conjugation and declension,—as our present English still does when it says, *I loved* instead of *I did love*, or *The King's throne* instead of *The throne of the King*. These two characteristics are what constitute it a distinct form, or stage, of the language:—its synthetic or generally inflected grammatical structure, and its homogeneous vocabulary.

As a subject of philological study the importance of this earliest known form of the English language cannot be overestimated; and much of what we possess written in it is also of great value for the matter.

If the English language as it was written a thousand years ago had been left to itself, and no other action from without had interfered with that of its spontaneous growth or inherent principles of change and development, it might not have remained so stationary as some more highly-cultivated languages have done throughout an equal space of time, but its form in the nineteenth century would in all probability have been only a comparatively slight modification of what it was in the ninth. It would have been essentially the same language. As the case stands, the English of the ninth century is one language, and the English of the nineteenth century another. They differ at least as much as the Italian differs from the Latin, or as English differs from German. The most familiar acquaintance with the one leaves the other unintelligible. So much is this so, that it became customary to distinguish them by different names, and to call the original form of the national speech Saxon, or Anglo-Saxon, *i.e.* the speech of the English Saxons, as if it were not English at all. The four great divisions of Old English were the Northumbrian, spoken from the Humber to the Forth; the Mercian, from the Thames northward; the West Saxon, spoken south of the Thames, but not in Kent, nor, perhaps, in Surrey; the Kentish in Kent and Surrey. Norfolk and Suffolk had also East Anglian dialects. The Northumbrian tongue first developed a literature, with Cædmon, Cynewulf, and Bæda. In this dialect also *Beowulf* was composed. Under Alfred the Wessex speech became the literary medium.

The Mercian dialect is preserved in versions of psalms and gospels. We have also Kentish devotional fragments.

DECAY OF THE EARLIEST ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP

It should seem not to be altogether correct to attribute the decline and extinction of the earliest literary civilization of the Angles and Saxons wholly to the Danish invasions. The Northmen did not make their appearance till towards the close of the eighth century, nor did their ravages occasion any considerable public alarm till long after the commencement of the ninth; but for a whole century preceding this date, learning in England appears to have been falling into decay. Bede, who died in 735, exactly ninety-seven years before that landing of the Danes in the Isle of Sheppey, in the reign of Egbert, which was followed by incessant attacks of a similar kind, until the fierce marauders at last won for themselves a settlement in the country, is the last name eminent for scholarship that occurs in this portion of the English annals. The historian William of Malmesbury, indeed, affirms that the death of Bede was fatal to learning in England, and especially to history; "insomuch that it may be said," he adds, writing in the early part of the twelfth century, "that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to our times." "There was not so much as one Englishman," Malmesbury declares, "left behind Bede, who emulated the glory which he had acquired by his studies, imitated his example, or pursued the path to knowledge which he had pointed out. A few, indeed, of his successors were good men, and not unlearned, but they generally spent their lives in an inglorious silence; while the far greater number sunk into sloth and ignorance, until by degrees the love of learning was quite extinguished in this island for a long time."

The devastations of the Danes completed what had probably been begun by the dissensions and confusion that attended the breaking up of the original political system established by the Angles and Saxons, and perhaps also by the natural decay of the national spirit among a race long habituated to a stirring and adventurous life, and now left in undisturbed ease and quiet before the spirit of a new and more intellectual activity had been sufficiently diffused among them. Nearly all the monasteries and the schools connected with them throughout the land were either actually laid in ashes by the northern invaders, or were deserted in the general terror and distraction occasioned by their attacks. When Alfred was a young man, about the middle of the ninth century, he could find no masters to instruct him in any of the higher branches of learning: there were at that time, according to his biographer Asser, few or none among the West Saxons who had any scholarship, or could so much as read with propriety and ease. The reading of the Latin language is probably what is here alluded to. Alfred has himself stated, in the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastorale*, that, though many of the English at his accession could read their native language well enough, the knowledge of the Latin tongue was so much decayed, that there were very few to the south of the Humber who understood the common prayers of the Church, or were capable of translating a single sentence of Latin into English; while to the south of the Thames there was not one possessed of this very moderate amount of learning. Contrasting this lamentable state of things with the better days that had gone before, he exclaims, "I wish thee to know that it comes very often into my mind, what wise men there were in England, both laymen and ecclesiastics, and how happy those times were to England! The sacred profession was diligent both to teach and to learn. Men from abroad sought wisdom and learning in this country, though we must now go out of it to obtain knowledge if we should wish to have it."

It was not till he was nearly forty years of age that Alfred himself commenced his study of the Latin language. Before this, however, and as soon as he had rescued his dominions from the hands of the Danes, and reduced these foreign disturbers to subjection, he had exerted himself with his characteristic activity in bringing about the restoration of letters as well as of peace and order. He had invited to his court all the most learned men he could discover anywhere in his native land, and had even brought over instructors for himself and his people from other countries. Werfrith, the bishop of Worcester; Ethelstan and Werwulf, two Mercian priests; and Plegmund, also a Mercian, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury, were some of the English of whose superior acquirements he thus took advantage. Asser he brought from the western extremity of Wales. Grimbald he obtained from France, having sent an embassy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and religious laymen, bearing valuable presents to his ecclesiastical superior Fulco, the archbishop of Rheims, to ask permission for the great scholar to be allowed to come to reside in

England. And so in other instances, like the bee, looking everywhere for honey, to quote the similitude of his biographer this admirable prince sought abroad in all directions for the treasure which his own kingdom did not afford.

It is probable, though there is no sufficient authority for the statement, that Alfred re-established many of the old monastic and episcopal schools in the various parts of the kingdom. Asser expressly mentions that he founded a seminary for the sons of the nobility, to the support of which he devoted no less than an eighth part of his whole revenue. Hither even some noblemen repaired who had far outgrown their youth, but nevertheless had scarcely or not at all begun their acquaintance with books. In another place Asser speaks of this school, to which Alfred is stated to have sent his own son Ethelward, as being attended not only by the sons of almost all the nobility of the realm, but also by many of the inferior classes. It was provided with several masters.

Up to this time absolute illiteracy seems to have been common even among the highest classes of the English. We have just seen that, when Alfred established his schools, they were as much needed for the nobility who had reached an advanced or mature age as for their children; and, indeed, the scheme of instruction seems to have been intended from the first to embrace the former as well as the latter, for, according to Asser's account, every person of rank or substance who, either from age or want of capacity, was unable to learn to read himself, was compelled to send to school either his son or a kinsman, or, if he had neither, a servant, that he might at least be read to by some one. The royal charters, instead of the names of the kings, sometimes exhibit their marks, used, as it is frankly explained, in consequence of their ignorance of letters.

The measures begun by Alfred for effecting the literary civilization of his subjects were probably pursued under his successors; but the period of the next three quarters of a century, notwithstanding some short intervals of repose, was on the whole too troubled to admit of much attention being given to the carrying out of his plans, or even, it may be apprehended, the maintenance of what he had set up. Dunstan, indeed, during his administration, appears to have exerted himself with zeal in enforcing a higher standard of learning as well as of morals, or of asceticism, among the clergy. But the renewal of the Danish wars, after the accession of Etheldred, and the state of misery and confusion in which the country was kept from this cause till its conquest by Canute, nearly forty years after, must have again laid in ruins the greater part of its literary as well as its ecclesiastical establishments. The concluding portion of the tenth century was thus, probably, a time of as deep intellectual darkness in England as it was throughout most of the rest of Europe. Under Canute, however, who was a wise as well as a powerful sovereign, the schools no doubt rose again and flourished.

The studies that were cultivated in those ages were few in number and of very limited scope. Alcuin, in a letter to his patron Charlemagne, has enumerated, in the fantastic rhetoric of the period, the subjects in which he instructed his pupils in the school of St. Martin at Paris. "To some," says he, "I administer the honey of the sacred writings; others I try to inebriate with the wine of the ancient classics. I begin the nourishment of some with the apples of grammatical subtlety. I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace." In plain language, his instructions embraced grammar, the Greek and Latin languages, astronomy, and theology. In the poem in which he gives an account of his own education at York, the same writer informs us that the studies there pursued comprehended, besides grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, "the harmony of the sky, the labour of the sun and moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets; the laws, risings, and settings of the stars, and the aërial motions of the sea; earthquakes; the nature of man, cattle, birds, and wild beasts, with their various kinds and forms; and the sacred Scriptures."

PRE-NORMAN LITERATURE

The earliest fragments of Saxon literature we possess are verse charms brought from the continent with the invaders. Three very ancient poems also suggest an oversea origin: *Widsith* (the far-voyager), with its references to the famous heroic cycles of Theodorie, Gunther, and Hagen, instinct with the love of travel, battle, and song; the *Complaint of Deor*, the lament of a fallen bard, which, with its refrain-effect and feeling for stanza-form shows a real lyrical sense; and *Waldherc*, a poem belonging to the saga of Walter of Aquitaine. Another poem of fifty lines *The Fight at Finnesburg* is related to the cycle of Finn.

Beowulf is now supposed to have been mainly composed on British soil, though inserted in it are fragments of great antiquity, such as the reference to the story of Sigmund. Its

3183 lines deal with the two great deeds of Beowulf—his fight with the monster Grendel and Grendel's mother for Hrothgar's sake, and his mortal victory over the fire-drake for his people's sake. It is partly a heroic tale, partly a myth of the sun and winter conflict. The character of Beowulf is nobly and generously shaped. A vague Nature-worship, which is half terror, fills the poem; and the presence of Wyrd, of irresistible Fate, dominates all the action.

Christian influence becomes audible with the Northumbrian *Cædmon*, who dwelt (660–680) in the monastery of Whitby. Under a sudden dream-inspiration he began to sing the fate of man from the Creation to the Last Judgment, including all biblical history. The war-passages exult with a fine pagan rapture. Various school-poems are the *Song of the Three Children*, the *Exodus*, *Genesis A. & B.* and the *Judith.*

To the first half of the eighth century belong certain interesting elegies. *The Ruined Burg* bewails the passing of splendid things; the *Wanderer* mourns a perishable joy and the implacable cruelty of Fate; the *Wife's Complaint* and the *Husband's Message* have the lyrical personal outcry; the *Seafarer* sings the fascination and cruelty of the sea.

The famous Exeter Book contains many *Riddles*, composed in centuries. Some of the nobler and more emotional have been attributed to the unconverted youth of Cynewulf, afterwards the devotional poet of the *Fates of the Apostles*, *The Christ*, *Juliana* and *Elene.* These four poems, filled with a sense of the bitterness of sin and the peace of redemption have been cryptically signed by the author. Certain others, unsigned, are attributed to him with some certainty. These are the fanciful and radiant *Phœnix*, the second part of the *Life of St. Guthlac*, the exultant *Harrowing of Hell*, the heroically told *Andreas*, and the *Dream of the Rood*, preserved in the Vercelli Book, in which poem, some scholars imagine, Cynewulf bids farewell to life.

Wessex literature was mainly due to *Alfred's* labours. With the direct intention of instructing his people he translated the *History and Geography of Orosius*, Bæda's *Ecclesiastical History*, the *Cura Pastoralis* of Pope Gregory, and Bœthius's *De Consolatione Philosophiæ.* In the last, we find some trace of the translator's own grave and pensive personality. After Alfred's time, a few sacred fragments, some ballads and war-songs represent poetry. The *Saxon Chronicle* is also broken by the glowing strophes of the *Battle of Brunanburh* (937).

The *Saxon Chronicle*, which began as simple annals when the Danish wars were making history, and in which Alfred, in his time, took a direct interest, was carried on at monastic centres like Winchester, Canterbury, Worcester, Abingdon and Peterborough.

Ethenwold, bishop of Winchester, was responsible for a collection of sermons known as the *Blickling Homilies*. Wulfstan of York also compiled similar homilies. These, with a few *Lives of the Saints*, show the weakening of Anglo-Saxon literature before the Conquest.

The remarkable distinction of the English language is, that it is the only one of all the languages of the European world which, combining the two elements of the Classic and the Gothic—or, as we may say, of ancient and of modern civilization—is distinctly modern in its skeleton, or bony system, and in its formative principle, and Classic, or antique, only in what of it is comparatively superficial and non-essential. The other living European languages are either without the Classic element altogether, as are those of the Scandinavian and Teutonic branches, or have it as their principal and governing element, as is the case with the Italian, the French, and the Spanish, which may all be described as only modernized forms of the Latin.

It should seem to follow from all this, that, both in its inner spirit and in its voice, both in its constructional and in its musical genius, the English language, and, through that, English literature, English civilization or culture generally, and the whole temper of the English mind, ought to have a capacity of sympathizing at once with the Classical and the Gothic, with the antique and the modern, with the past and the present, to an extent not to be matched by any other speech or nation of Europe.

It so happens, too, that the political fortunes of this English tongue have been in singular accordance with its constitution and natural adaptation, inasmuch as, at the same time that it stands in this remarkable position in the Old World, its position is still more pre-eminent in the New World, whether that designation be confined to the continent of America or understood as including the entire field of modern colonization in every quarter of the globe.

The English are the only really colonizing people now extant. As we remember Coleridge once expressing it, it is the natural destiny of their country, as an island, to be the mother of nations. Their geographical position, concurring with their peculiar genius, and with all the other favourable circumstances of the case, gives them the command of the readiest access to the most distant parts of the earth,—a universal highway, almost as free as is the air to the swarming bees. And, accordingly, all the greatest communities of the future, whether they be seated beyond the Atlantic or beyond the Pacific, promise to be communities of English blood and English speech.

The Danish conquest of England preceded the Norman by exactly half a century, and throughout this space, the country had, with little interruption, enjoyed a government which, if not always national,—and it was that too for rather more than half of the fifty years—was at any rate acknowledged and submitted to by the whole nation. The public tranquillity was scarcely ever disturbed for more than a moment by any internal commotion, and never at all by attacks from abroad. During this interval, therefore, many of the monastic and other schools that had existed in the days of Alfred, Athelstan, and Edgar, but had been swept away or allowed to fall into decay in the disastrous forty years that succeeded the decease of the last-mentioned monarch, were probably re-established. The more frequent communication with the Continent that began in the reign of the Confessor must also have been favourable to the intellectual advancement of the country. The dawn of the revival of letters in England, therefore, may be properly dated from a point about fifty years antecedent to the Norman Conquest, or from not very long after the commencement of the eleventh century.

Still at the date of the Conquest the country was undoubtedly in regard to everything intellectual in a very backward state. Ordericus Vitalis, almost a contemporary writer, and himself a native of England, though educated abroad, describes his countrymen generally as having been found by the Normans a rustic and almost illiterate people (*agrestes et pene illiteratos*). The last epithet may be understood as chiefly intended to characterize the clergy, for the great body of the laity at this time were everywhere illiterate. A few years after the Conquest, the king took advantage of the general illiteracy of the native clergy to deprive great numbers of them of their benefices, and to supply their places with foreigners. His real or his only motive for making this substitution may possibly not have been that which he avowed; but he would scarcely have alleged what was notoriously not the fact, even as a pretence.

The Norman Conquest introduced a new state of things in this as in most other respects. That event made England, as it were, a part of the Continent, where, not long before, a revival of letters had taken place scarcely less remarkable, if we take into consideration the circumstances of the time, than the next great revolution of the same kind in the beginning of the fifteenth century. In France, indeed, the learning that had flourished in the time of Charlemagne had never undergone so great a decay as had befallen that of England since the days of Alfred. The schools planted by Alcuin and the philosophy taught by Erigena had both been perpetuated by a line of the disciples and followers of these distinguished masters, which had never been altogether interrupted. But in the tenth century this learning of the West had met and been intermixed with a new learning originally from the East, but obtained directly from the Arab conquerors of Spain. The Arabs had first become acquainted with the literature of Greece in the beginning of the eighth century, and it instantly exercised upon their minds an awakening influence of the same powerful kind with that with which it again kindled Europe seven centuries afterwards. One difference, however, between the two cases is very remarkable. The mighty effects that arose out of the second revival of the ancient Greek literature in the modern world were produced almost solely by its eloquence and poetry; but these were precisely the parts of it that were neglected by the Arabs. The Greek books which they sought after with such extraordinary avidity were almost exclusively those that related either to metaphysics and mathematics on the one hand, or to medicine, chemistry, botany, and the other departments of physical knowledge, on the other. All Greek works of these descriptions that they could procure they not only translated into their own language, but in course of time illustrated with voluminous commentaries. The prodigious magnitude to which this Arabic literature eventually grew will stagger the reader who has adopted the common notion with regard to what are called the middle or the dark ages. "The royal library of the Fatimites" (sovereigns of Egypt), says Gibbon, "consisted of 100,000 manuscripts, eloquently transcribed and splendidly bound, which were lent, without jealousy or avarice, to the students of Cairo. Yet this collection must appear moderate if we can believe that the Ommiades of Spain had formed a library of 600,000 volumes, 44 of which were employed in the mere catalogues. Their capital Cordova with the adjacent towns of Malaga, Álmeria, and Murcia, has given birth to more than 300 writers, and above 70 public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom."[1] The difficulty we have in conceiving the existence of a state of things such as that here described arises in great part from the circumstances of the entire disappearance now, and for so long a period, of all this Arabic power and splendour from the scene of European affairs. But, long extinct as it has been, the dominion of the Arabs in Europe was no mere momentary blaze. It lasted, with little diminution, for nearly five hundred years, a period as long as from the age of Chaucer to the present day, and abundantly sufficient for the growth of a body of literature and science even of the wonderful extent that has been described. In the tenth century Arabic Spain was the fountainhead of learning in Europe. Thither students were accustomed to repair from every other country to study in the Arabic schools; and many of the teachers in the chief towns of France and Italy had finished their education in these seminaries, and were now diffusing among their countrymen the new knowledge which they had thence acquired. The writings of several of the Greek authors, also, and especially those of Aristotle, had been made generally known to scholars by Latin versions of them made from the Arabic.

There is no trace of this new literature having found its way to England before the Norman Conquest. But that revolution immediately brought it in its train. "The Conqueror himself," observes a writer who has illustrated this subject with a profusion of curious learning, "patronized and loved letters. He filled the bishoprics and abbacies of England with the most learned of his countrymen, who had been educated at the University of Paris, at that time the most flourishing school in Europe. He placed Lanfranc, abbot of the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, in the see of Canterbury—an eminent master of logic, the subtleties of which he employed with great dexterity in a famous controversy concerning the real presence. Anselm, an acute metaphysician and theologian, his immediate successor in the same see, was called from the government of the abbey of Bec, in Normandy. Herman, a Norman, bishop of Salisbury, founded a noble library in the ancient cathedral of that see. Many of the Norman prelates preferred in England by the Conqueror were polite scholars. Godfrey, prior to St. Swithin's at Winchester, a native of Cambray, was an elegant Latin epigrammatist, and wrote with the smartness and ease of Martial; a circumstance which, by the way, shows that the literature of the monks at this period was of a more liberal cast than that which we commonly annex to their character and profession."[1] Geoffrey, also, another learned Norman, came over from the University of Paris, and established a school at Dunstable, where, according to Matthew Paris, he composed a play, called *The Play of St. Catharine*, which was acted by his scholars, dressed characteristically in copes borrowed from the sacrist of the neighbouring abbey of St. Albans, of which Geoffrey afterwards became abbot. "The king himself," Warton continues, "gave no small countenance to the clergy, in sending his son Henry Beauclerc to the abbey of Abingdon, where he was initiated in the sciences under the care of the abbot Grimbald, and Faritius, a physician of Oxford. Robert d'Oilly, constable of Oxford Castle, was ordered to pay for the board of the young prince in the convent, which the king himself frequently visited. Nor was William wanting in giving ample revenues to learning. He founded the magnificent abbeys of Battle and Selby, with other smaller convents. His nobles and their successors co-operated with this liberal spirit in erecting many monasteries. Herbert de Losinga, a monk of Normandy, bishop of Thetford in Norfolk, instituted and endowed with large possessions a Benedictine abbey at Norwich, consisting of sixty monks. To mention no more instances, such great institutions of persons dedicated to religious and literary leisure, while they diffused an air of civility, and softened the manners of the people in their respective circles, must have afforded powerful incentives to studious pursuits, and have consequently added no small degree of stability to the interests of learning."[2]

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[1] *Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp.*, c. lii.

To this it may be added, that most of the successors of the Conqueror continued to show the same regard for learning of which he had set the example. Nearly all of them had themselves received a learned education. Besides Henry Beauclerc, Henry II., whose father Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, was famous for his literary acquirements, had been carefully educated under the superintendence of his admirable uncle, the Earl of Gloucester; and he appears to have taken care that his children should not want the advantages he had himself enjoyed; for at least the three eldest, Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard, are all noted for their literary as well as their other accomplishments.

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[1] Warton's "Dissertation on Introduction of Learning into England" prefixed to *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, p. cxii (edit. of 1840).

[2] *Ibid.* Some inaccuracies in Warton's account of Geoffrey and his play are corrected from a note by Mr. Douce.

What learning existed, however, was still for the most part confined to the clergy. Even the nobility—although it cannot be supposed that they were left altogether without literary instruction—appear to have been very rarely initiated in any of those branches which were considered as properly constituting the scholarship of the times. The familiar knowledge of the Latin language in particular, which was then the key to all other erudition, seems to have been almost exclusively confined to churchmen, and to those few of the laity who embraced the profession of school-masters, as some, at least, on the Continent, were now wont to do. The contemporary writer of a *Life oj Becket* relates, that when Henry II., in 1164, sent an embassy to the Pope, in which the Earl of Arundel and three other noblemen were associated with an archbishop, four bishops, and three of the royal chaplains, four of the churchmen, at the audience to which they were admitted, first delivered themselves in as many Latin harangues; and then the Earl of Arundel stood up, and made a speech in English which he began with the words, " We, who are illiterate laymen, do not understand one word of what the bishops have said to your holiness."

The notion that learning properly belonged exclusively to the clergy, and that it was a possession in which the laity were unworthy to participate, was in some degree the common belief of the age, and by the learned themselves was almost universally held as an article of faith that admitted of no dispute. Nothing can be more strongly marked than the tone of contempt which is expressed for the mass of the community, the unlearned vulgar, by the scholars of this period: in their correspondence with one another especially, they seem to look upon all beyond their own small circle as beings of an inferior species. This pride of theirs, however, worked beneficially upon the whole: in the first place, it was in great part merely a proper estimation of the advantages of knowledge over ignorance; and, secondly, it helped to make the man of the pen a match for him of the sword—the natural liberator of the human race for its natural oppressor. At the same time, it intimates very forcibly at once the comparative rarity of the highly prized distinction, and the depth of the darkness that still reigned far and wide around the few scattered points of light.

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Schools and other seminaries of learning, however, were greatly multiplied in this age, and were also elevated in their character, in England as well as elsewhere. Both Archbishop Lanfranc and his successor Anselm exerted themselves with great zeal in establishing proper schools in connection with the cathedrals and monasteries in all parts of the kingdom; and the object was one which was also patronized and promoted by the general voice of the church. In 1179 it was ordered by the third general council of Lateran, that in every cathedral there should be appointed and maintained a head teacher, or scholastic, as was the title given to him, who, besides keeping a school of his own, should have authority over all the other school-masters of the diocese, and the sole right of granting licences, without which no one should be entitled to teach. In former times the bishop himself had frequently undertaken the office of scholastic of the diocese; but its duties were rarely efficiently performed under that arrangement, and at length they seem to have come to be generally altogether neglected. After the custom was introduced of maintaining it as a distinct office, it was filled in many cases by the most learned persons of the time. And besides these cathedral schools there were others established in all the religious houses, many of which were also of high reputation. It is reckoned that of religious houses of all kinds there were founded no fewer than five hundred and fifty-seven between the Conquest and the death of King John; and, besides these, there still existed many others that had been founded in earlier times. All these cathedral and conventual schools, however, appear to have been intended exclusively for the instruction of persons proposing to make the church their profession. But mention is also made of others established both in many of the principal cities and even in the villages, which would seem to have been open to the community at large; for it may be presumed that the laity, though generally excluded from the benefits of a learned education, were not left wholly without the means of obtaining some elementary instruction. Some of these city schools, however, were eminent as institutes of the highest departments of learning. One in particular is mentioned in the *History* ascribed to Matthew Paris as established in the town of St. Albans, which was presided over by Matthew, a physician, who had been educated at the famous school of Salerno, in Italy, and by his nephew Garinus, who was eminent for his knowledge of the civil and canon laws, and where we may therefore suppose instructions were given both in law and in medicine. According to the account of London by William Stephanides, or Fitz-Stephen, written in the reign of Henry II., there were then three of these schools of a higher order established in London, besides several others that were occasionally opened by distinguished teachers. The London schools, however, do not seem to have been academies of science and the higher learning, like that of St. Albans: Fitz-Stephen's description would rather lead us to infer that, although they were attended by pupils of different ages and degrees of proficiency, they were merely schools of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics. "On holidays," he says, "it is usual for these schools to hold public assemblies in the churches, in which the scholars engage in demonstrative or logical disputations, some using enthymems, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory, and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others have the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquire great applause; some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious but fallacious arguments. After the disputations other scholars deliver rhetorical declamations, in which they observe all the rules of art, and neglect no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contend against each other, in verse, about the principles of grammar, and the preterites and supines of verbs."

The twelfth century may be considered as properly the age of the institution of what we now call Universities in Europe, though many of the establishments that then assumed the regular form of universities had undoubtedly existed long before as schools or *studia*. This was the case with the oldest of the European universities, with Bologna and Paris, and also, in all probability, with Oxford and Cambridge. But it may be questioned if even Bologna, the mother of all the rest, was entitled by any organization or constitution it had received to take a higher name than a school or *studium* before the latter part of this century. It is admitted that it was not till about the year 1200 that the school out of which the University of Paris arose had come to subsist as an incorporation, divided into nations, and presided over by a rector.[1] The University of

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[1] See Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 255.

Oxford, properly so called, is probably of nearly the same antiquity. It seems to have been patronized and fostered by Richard I., as that of Paris was by his great rival, Philip Augustus. Both Oxford and Cambridge had undoubtedly been eminent seats of learning long before this time, as London, St. Albans, and other cities had also been; but there is no evidence that either the one or the other had at an earlier date become anything more than a great school, or even that it was distinguished by any assigned rank or privileges above the other great schools of the kingdom. In the reign of Richard I. we find the University of Oxford recognized as an establishment of the same kind with the University of Paris, and as the rival of that seminary.

We have the following account of what is commonly deemed the origin of the University of Cambridge in the continuation of the history of Ingulphus, attributed to Peter of Blois, under the year 1109:—"Joffrid, abbot of Croyland, sent to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, master Gislebert, his fellow monk, and professor of theology, with three other monks who had followed him into England; who, being very well instructed in philosophical theorems and other primitive sciences, went every day to Cambridge, and, having hired a certain public barn, taught the sciences openly, and in a little time collected a great concourse of scholars; for, in the very second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much that there was no house, barn, nor church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, and, imitating the plan of the Studium of Orleans, brother Odo, who was eminent as a grammarian and satirical poet, read grammar, according to the doctrine of Priscian and of his commentator Remigius, to the boys and younger students, that were assigned to him, early in the morning. At one o'clock, brother Terricus, a most acute sophist, read the *Logic of Aristotle*, according to the *Introductions and Commentaries of Porphyry and Averroes*,[1] to those who were further advanced. At three, brother William read lectures on Tully's *Rhetoric* and Quintilian's *Institutions*. But Master Gislebert, being ignorant of the English, but very expert in the

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[1] The works of Averroes, however, who died in 1198, were certainly not in existence at the time here referred to. Either Peter of Blois must have been ignorant of this, or—if he was really the author of the statement—the name must have been the insertion of some later transcriber of his text.

Latin and French languages, preached in the several churches to the people on Sundays and holidays."[1] The history in which this passage occurs is, as will presently be shown, as apocryphal as that of which it professes to be the continuation; but even if we waive the question of its authenticity, there is here no hint of any sort of incorporation or public establishment whatever; the description is merely that of a school set on foot and conducted by an association of private individuals. And even this private school would seem to have been first opened only in the year 1109, although there may possibly have been other schools taught in the place before. It may be gathered from what is added, that at the time when the account, if it was written by Peter of Blois, must have been drawn up (the latter part of the same century), the school founded by Gislebert and his companions had attained to great celebrity; but there is nothing to lead us to suppose that it had even then become more than a very distinguished school. "From this little fountain," he says, "which hath swelled into a great river, we now behold the city of God made glad, and all England rendered fruitful, by many teachers and doctors issuing from Cambridge, after the likeness of the holy Paradise."

Notwithstanding, however, the rising reputation of Oxford and Cambridge, the most ambitious of the English students continued to resort for part of their education to the more distinguished foreign schools during the whole of the twelfth century. Thus, it is recorded that several volumes of the Arabian philosophy were brought into England by Daniel Merlac, who, in the year 1185, had gone to Toledo to study mathematics. Salerno was still the chief school of medicine, and Bologna of law, although Oxford was also becoming famous for the latter study. But, as a place of general instruction, the University of Paris stood at the head of all others. Paris was then wont to be styled, by way of pre-eminence, the City of Letters. So many Englishmen, or, to speak more strictly, subjects of the English crown, were constantly found among the students at this great seminary, that they formed one of the four nations into which the members of the university were divided. The English students are described by their countryman, the poet Nigellus Wireker, in the latter part of the twelfth century, in such a manner as to show that they were already noted for that spirit of display and expense which still makes so prominent a part of our continental reputation :—

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[1] *Petri Blesensis Continuatio ad Historiam Ingulphi: in Rerum Anglicarum Script. Vet.*: Oxon. 1684, p. 114. The translation is that given by Henry in his *History of Britain.*

> Moribus egregii, verbo vultuque venusti,
>   Ingenio pollent, consilioque vigent;
> Dona pluunt populis, et detestantur avaros,
>   Fercula multiplicant, et sine lege bibunt.[1]
>
> Of noble manners, gracious look and speech,
> Strong sense, with genius brightened, shines in each.
> Their free hand still rains largess ; when they dine
> Course follows course, in rivers flows the wine.

Among the students at the University of Paris in the twelfth century are to be found nearly all the most distinguished names among the learned of every country. One of the teachers, the celebrated Abelard, is said to have alone had as pupils twenty persons who afterwards became cardinals, and more than fifty who rose to be bishops and archbishops. Thomas à Becket received part of his education here. Several of the most eminent teachers were Englishmen. Among these may be particularly mentioned Robert of Melun (so called from having first taught in that city), and Robert White, or Pullus, as he is called in Latin. Robert of Melun, who afterwards became bishop of Hereford, distinguished himself by the zeal and ability with which he opposed the novel views which the rising sect of the Nominalists were then introducing both into philosophy and theology. He is the author of several theological treatises, none of which, however, have been printed. Robert White, after teaching some years at Paris, where he was attended by crowded audiences, was induced to return to his own country, where he is said to have read lectures on theology at Oxford for five years, which greatly contributed to spread the renown of that rising seminary. After having declined a bishopric offered to him by Henry I., he went to reside at Rome in 1143, on the invitation of Celestine II., and was soon after made a cardinal and chancellor of the holy see. One work written by him has been printed, a summary of theology, under the then common title of *The Book of Sentences*, which has the reputation of being distinguished by the superior correctness of its style and the lucidness of its method.

Another celebrated name among the Englishmen who are recorded to have studied at Paris in those days is that of

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[1] These verses are quoted by A. Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, p. 55. The poem in which they occur is entitled *Speculum Stultorum*, or sometimes *Brunellus* (from its principal personage). It has been repeatedly printed.

Nicolas Breakspear, who afterwards became pope by the title of Adrian IV. But, above all others, John of Salisbury deserves to be here mentioned. It is in his writings that we find the most complete account that has reached us not only of the mode of study followed at Paris, but of the entire learning of the age.

RISE OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

At this time those branches of literary and scientific knowledge which were specially denominated the arts were considered as divided into two great classes,—the first or more elementary of which, comprehending Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, was called the Trivium; the second, comprehending Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, the Quadrivium. The seven arts, so classified, used to be thus enumerated in a Latin hexameter:—

> Lingua, Tropus, Ratio, Numerus, Tonus, Angulus, Astra:

or, with definitions subjoined, in two still more singularly constructed verses,—

> *Gram.* loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhet.* verba colorat,
> *Mus.* cadit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit astra.

John of Salisbury speaks of this system of the sciences as an ancient one in his day. "The Trivium and Quadrivium," he says, in his work entitled *Metalogicus*, "were so much admired by our ancestors in former ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution of all questions and the removing of all difficulties; for whoever understood the Trivium could explain all manner of books without a teacher; but he who was further advanced, and was master also of the Quadrivium, could answer all questions and unfold all the secrets of nature." The present age, however, had outgrown the simplicity of this arrangement; and various new studies had been added to the ancient seven, as necessary to complete the circle of the sciences and the curriculum of a liberal education.

It was now, in particular, that Theology first came to be ranked as a science. This was the age of St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers, and of Peter Lombard, the first of the Schoolmen. The distinction between these two classes of writers is, that the latter do, and the former do not, treat their subject in a systematizing spirit. The change was the consequence of the cultivation of the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics.

When these studies were first introduced into the schools of the West, they were wholly unconnected with theology. But, especially at a time when all the learned were churchmen, it was impossible that the great instrument of thought and reasoning could long remain unapplied to the most important of all the subjects of thought—the subject of religion. It has already been remarked that John Erigena and other Irish divines introduced philosophy and metaphysics into the discussion of questions of religion as early as the ninth century; and they are consequently entitled to be regarded as having first set the example of the method afterwards pursued by the schoolmen. But, although the influence of their writings may probably be traced in preparing the way for the introduction of the scholastic system, and also, afterwards, perhaps, in modifying its spirit, that system was derived immediately, in the shape in which it appeared in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, from another source. Erigena was a Platonist; the spirit of his philosophy was that of the school of Alexandria. But the first schoolmen, properly so called, were Aristotelians: they drew their logic and metaphysics originally from the Latin translations of the works of Aristotle made from the Arabic. And they may also have been indebted for some of their views to the commentaries of the Arabic doctors. But, whether they took their method of philosophy entirely from the ancient heathen sage, or in part from his modern Mahomedan interpreters and illustrators, it could in neither case have had at first any necessary or natural alliance with Christianity. Yet it very soon, as we have said, formed this alliance. Both Lanfranc and Anselm, although not commonly reckoned among the schoolmen, were imbued with the spirit of the new learning, and it is infused throughout their theological writings. Abelard soon after, before he was yet a churchman, may almost be considered to have wielded it as a weapon of scepticism. Even so used, however, religion was still the subject to which it was applied. At last came Peter Lombard, who, by the publication, about the middle of the twelfth century, of his celebrated *Four Books of Sentences*, properly founded the system of what is called the Scholastic Theology. The schoolmen, from the Master of the Sentences, as Lombard was designated, down to Francis Suarez, who died after the commencement of the seventeenth century, were all theologians. Although, however, religious speculation was the field of thought upon which the spirit of the Aristotelian philosophy chiefly expended itself, there was scarcely any one of the arts or sciences upon which it did not in some degree seize. The scholastic logic became the universal instrument of thought and study: every branch of human learning was attempted to be pursued by its assistance; and most branches were more or less affected by its influence in regard to the forms which they assumed.

CLASSICAL LEARNING.—MATHEMATICS.—MEDICINE.—LAW.—BOOKS

The classical knowledge of this period, however, was almost confined to the Roman authors, and some of the most eminent of these were as yet unstudied and unknown. Even John of Salisbury, though a few Greek words are to be found in his compositions, seems to have had only the slightest possible acquaintance with that language. Both it and the Hebrew, nevertheless, were known to Abelard and Eloisa; and it is probable that there were both in England and other European countries a few students of the Oriental tongues, for the acquisition of which inducements and facilities must have been presented, not only by the custom of resorting to the Arabic colleges in Spain, and the constant intercourse with the East kept up by the pilgrimages and the crusades, but also by the numbers of learned Jews that were everywhere to be found. In England the Jews had schools in London, York, Lincoln, Lynn, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns, which appear to have been attended by Christians as well as by those of their own persuasion. Some of these seminaries, indeed, were rather colleges than schools. Besides the Hebrew and Arabic languages, arithmetic and medicine are mentioned among the branches of knowledge that were taught in them; and the masters were generally the most distinguished of the rabbis. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the age of Sarchi, the Kimchis, Maïmonides, and other distinguished names, rabbinical learning was in an eminently flourishing state.

There is no certain evidence that the Arabic numerals were yet known in Europe: they certainly were not in general use. Although the *Elements of Euclid* and other geometrical works had been translated into Latin from the Arabic, the mathematical sciences appear to have been but little studied. "The science of demonstration," says John of Salisbury, in his *Metalogicus*, "is of all others the most difficult, and, alas! is almost quite neglected, except by a very few who apply to the study of the mathematics, and particularly of geometry. But this last is at present very little attended to amongst us, and is only studied by some persons in Spain, Egypt, and Arabia, for the sake of astronomy. One reason of this is, that those parts of the works of Aristotle that relate to the demonstrative sciences are so ill translated, and so incorrectly transcribed, that we meet with insurmountable difficulties in every chapter." The name of the mathematics at this time, indeed, was chiefly given to the science of astrology. "Mathematicians," says Peter of Blois, "are those who, from the positions of the stars, the aspect of the firmament, and the motions of the planets, discover things that are to come." Astronomy, however, or the true science of the stars, which was zealously cultivated by the Arabs in the East and in Spain, seems also to have had some cultivators among the learned of Christian Europe. Latin translations existed of several Greek and Arabic astronomical works. In the history attributed to Ingulphus, is the following curious description of a sort of scheme or representation of the planetary system called the Nadir, which is stated to have been destroyed when the abbey of Croyland was burnt in 1091: "We then lost a most beautiful and precious table, fabricated of different kinds of metals, according to the variety of the stars and heavenly signs. Saturn was of copper, Jupiter of gold, Mars of iron, the Sun of latten, Mercury of amber, Venus of tin, the Moon of silver. The eyes were charmed, as well as the mind instructed, by beholding the colure circles, with the zodiac and all its signs, formed with wonderful art, of metals and precious stones, according to their several natures, forms, figures, and colours. It was the most admired and celebrated Nadir in all England." These last words would seem to imply that such tables were then not uncommon. This one, it is stated, had been presented to a former abbot of Croyland by a king of France.

John of Salisbury, in his account of his studies at Paris, makes no mention either of medicine or of law. With regard to the former, indeed, he elsewhere expressly tells us that the Parisians themselves used to go to study it at Salerno and Montpellier. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, we find a school of medicine established at Paris, which soon became very celebrated. Of course there were, at an earlier date, persons who practised the medical art in that city. The physicians in all the countries of Europe at this period were generally churchmen. Many of the Arabic medical works were early translated into Latin; but the Parisian professors soon began to publish treatises on the art of their own. The science of the physicians of this age, besides comprehending whatever was to be learned respecting the diagnostics and treatment of diseases from Hippocrates, Galen, and the other ancient writers, embracing a considerable body of botanical and chemical knowledge. Chemistry in particular the Arabs had carried far beyond the point at which it had been left by the ancients. Of anatomy little could as yet be accurately known, while the dissection of the human subject was not practised. Yet it would appear that physicians and surgeons were already beginning to be distinguished from each other. Both the canon and civil laws were also introduced into the routine of study at the University of Paris soon after the time when John of Salisbury studied there. The canon law was originally considered to be a part of theology, and only took the form of a separate study after the publication of the systematic compilation of it called the *Decretum of Gratian*, in 1151. Gratian was a monk of Bologna, and his work, not the first collection of the kind, but the most complete and the best-arranged that had yet been compiled, was immediately introduced as a text-book in that university. It may be regarded as having laid the foundation of the science of the canon law, in the same manner as the system of the scholastic philosophy was founded by Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*. Regular lecturers upon it very soon appeared at Orleans, at Paris, at Oxford, and all the other chief seats of learning in western Christendom; and before the end of the twelfth century no other study was more eagerly pursued, or attracted greater crowds of students, than that of the canon law. One of its first and most celebrated teachers at Paris was Girard la Pucelle, an Englishman, who afterwards became bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. Girard taught the canon law in Paris from 1160 to 1177; and, in consideration of his distinguished merits and what was deemed the great importance of his instructions, he received from Pope Alexander III. letters exempting him from the obligation of residing on his preferments in England while he was so engaged; this being, it is said, the first known example of such a privilege being granted to any professor.[1] The same professors who taught the canon law taught also, along with it, the civil law, the systematic study of which, likewise, took its rise in this century, and at the University of Bologna, where the *Pandects of Justinian*, of which a more perfect copy than had before been known is said to have been found in 1137 at Amalfi,[1] were arranged and first lectured upon by the German Irnerius,—the Lamp of the Law, as he was called,—about the year 1150. Both the canon and the civil law, however, are said to have been taught a few years before this time at Oxford by Roger, surnamed the Bachelor, a monk of Bec, in Normandy. The study was, from the first, vehemently opposed by the practitioners of the common law; but, sustained by the influence of the church, and eventually also favoured by the government, it rose above all attempts to put it down. John of Salisbury affirms that, by the blessing of God, the more it was persecuted the more it flourished. Peter of Blois, in one of his letters, gives us the following curious account of the ardour with which it was pursued under the superintendence of Archbishop Theobald:—"In the house of my master, the archbishop of Canterbury, there are several very learned men, famous for their knowledge of law and politics, who spend the time between prayers and dinner in lecturing, disputing, and debating causes. To us all the knotty questions of the kingdom are referred, which are produced in the common hall, and every one in his order, having first prepared himself, declares, with all the eloquence and acuteness of which he is capable, but without wrangling, what is wisest and safest to be done. If God suggests the soundest opinion to the youngest amongst us, we all agree to it without envy or detraction."[2]

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[1] Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 244.

Study in every department must have been still greatly impeded by the scarcity and high price of books; but their multiplication now went on much more rapidly than it had formerly done. We have already noticed the immense libraries said to have been accumulated by the Arabs, both in their Oriental and European seats of empire. No collections to be compared with these existed anywhere in Christian Europe; but, of the numerous monasteries that were planted in every country, few were without libraries of greater or less extent. A convent without a library, it used to be proverbially said, was like a castle without an armoury. When the monastery of Croyland was burnt in 1091, its library, according to

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[1] "The discovery of the *Pandects* at Amalfi," says Gibbon, "is first noticed (in 1501) by Ludovicus Bologninus, on the faith of a Pisan *Chronicle*, without a name or date. The whole story, though unknown to the twelfth century, embellished by ignorant ages, and suspected by rigid criticism, is not however destitute of much internal probability."

[2] Ep. vi., as translated in Henry's *History of Britain*.

Ingulphus, consisted of 900 volumes, of which 300 were very large. "In every great abbey," says Warton, "there was an apartment called the Scriptorium; where many writers were constantly busied in transcribing not only the service-books for the choir, but books for the library. The Scriptorium of St. Albans abbey was built by Abbot Paulin, a Norman, who ordered many volumes to be written there, about the year 1080. Archbishop Lanfranc furnished the copies. Estates were often granted for the support of the Scriptorium. . . . I find some of the classics written in the English monasteries very early. Henry, a Benedictine monk of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, transcribed in the year 1178 Terence, Boethius, Suetonius, and Claudian. Of these he formed one book, illuminating the initials, and forming the brazen bosses of the covers with his own hands." Other instances of the same kind are added. The monks were much accustomed both to illuminate and to bind books, as well as to transcribe them. "The scarcity of parchment," it is afterwards observed, "undoubtedly prevented the transcription of many other books in these societies. About the year 1120, one Master Hugh, being appointed by the convent of St. Edmonsbury, in Suffolk, to write and illuminate a grand copy of the Bible for their library, could procure no parchment for this purpose in England."[1] Paper made of cotton, however, was certainly in common use in the twelfth century, though no evidence exists that that manufactured from linen rags was known till about the middle of the thirteenth.

THE LATIN LANGUAGE

During the whole of the Anglo-Norman period, and down to a much later date, in England as in the other countries of Christendom, the common language of literary composition, in all works intended for the perusal of the educated classes, was still the Latin, the language of religion throughout the western world, as it had been from the first ages of the church. Christianity had not only, through its monastic institutions, saved from destruction, in the breaking up of the Roman empire, whatever we still possess of ancient literature, but had also, by its priesthood and its ritual, preserved the language of Rome in some sort still a living and spoken tongue—corrupted indeed by the introduction of many new and barbarous terms, and illegitimate acceptations, and by much bad taste in style and phraseology, but still wholly unchanged in its grammatical forms, and even in its vocabulary much less altered than it probably would have been if it had continued all the while to be spoken and written by an unmixed Roman population. It would almost seem as if, even in the Teutonic countries, such as England, the services of the church, uninterruptedly repeated in the same words since the first ages, had kept up in the general mind something of a dim traditionary understanding of the old imperial tongue. We read of some foreign ecclesiastics, who could not speak English, being accustomed to preach to the people in Latin. A passage quoted above from the Croyland history seems to imply that Gislebert, or Gilbert, one of the founders of the University of Cambridge, used to employ Latin as well as French on such occasions. So, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that, in a progress which he made through Wales in 1186, to assist Archbishop Baldwin in preaching a new crusade for the delivery of the Holy Land, he was always most successful when he appealed to the people in a Latin sermon ; he asserts, indeed, that they did not understand a word of it, although it never failed to melt them into tears, and to make them come in crowds to take the cross. No doubt they were acted upon chiefly through their ears and their imaginations, and for the most part only supposed that they comprehended what they were listening to ; but it is probable that their self-deception was assisted by their catching a word or phrase here and there the meaning of which they really understood. The Latin tongue must in those days have been heard in common life on a thousand occasions from which it has now passed away. It was the language of all the learned professions, of law and physic as well as of divinity, in all their grades. It was in Latin that the teachers at the Universities (many of whom, as well as of the ecclesiastics, were foreigners) delivered their prelections in all the sciences, and that all the disputations and other exercises among the students were carried on. It was the same at all the monastic schools and other seminaries of learning. The number of persons by whom these various institutions were attended was very great : they were of all ages from boyhood to advanced manhood ; and poor scholars must have been found in every village, mingling with every class of the people, in some one or other of the avocations which they followed in the intervals of their attendance at the Universities, or after they had finished their education, from parish priests down to wandering beggars.

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[1] *Introd. of Learning into England*, p. cxvi.

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND

It is commonly asserted that for some reigns after the Norman Conquest the exclusive language of government and legislation in England was the French,—that all pleadings, at least in the supreme courts, were carried on in that language,—and that in it all deeds were drawn up and all laws promulgated. "This popular notion," observes a late learned writer, "cannot be easily supported. . . . Before the reign of Henry III. we cannot discover a deed or law drawn or composed in French. Instead of prohibiting the English language, it was employed by the Conqueror and his successors in their charters until the reign of Henry II., when it was superseded, not by the French but by the Latin language, which had been gradually gaining, or rather regaining, ground; for the charters anterior to Alfred are invariably in Latin."[1] So far was the Conqueror from showing any aversion to the English language, or making any such attempt as is ascribed to him to effect its abolition, that, according to Ordericus Vitalis, when he first came over he strenuously applied himself to learn it for the special purpose of understanding, without the aid of an interpreter, the causes that were pleaded before him, and persevered in that endeavour till the tumult of many other occupations, and what the historian calls "durior ætas"—a more iron time—of necessity compelled him to give it up. The Dominican friar Robert Holcot, writing in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, informs us that there was then no institution of children in the old English—that the first language they learned was the French, and that through that tongue they were afterwards taught Latin; and he adds that this was a practice which had been introduced at the Conquest, and which had continued ever since.[2] About the middle of the same century Ranulf Higden, in his *Polychronicon*, says, as the passage is translated by Trevisa, "This apayringe (impairing) of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges; oon is for children in scole, aghenes (against) the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth (be) compelled for to leve her (their) owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe (have since) that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytaught (be taught) for to speke Frensche from the time that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and cunneth (can) speke and playe with a childes brooche; and uplondish (rustic) men wol likne hem self (will liken themselves) to gentilmen, and fondeth (are fond) with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of."[1] The teachers in the schools, in fact, were generally, if not universally, ecclesiastics; and the Conquest had Normanized the Church quite as much as the State. Immediately after that revolution great numbers of foreigners were brought over, both to serve in the parochial cures and to fill the monasteries that now began to multiply so rapidly. These churchmen must have been in constant intercourse with the people of all classes in various capacities, not only as teachers of youth, but as the instructors of their parishioners from the altar, and as holding daily and hourly intercourse with them in all the relations that subsist between pastor and flock. They probably in this way diffused their own tongue throughout the land of their adoption to a greater extent than is commonly suspected. In the twelfth century we gather that the French language was very generally familiar to the middle classes in England, at least in the great towns. It was at any rate the only language spoken for some ages after the Conquest by our kings, and not only by nearly all the nobility, but by a large proportion even of the inferior landed proprietors, most of whom also were of Norman birth or descent. Ritson, in his "Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy," prefixed to his *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, has collected, but not in the most satisfactory manner, some of the evidence we have as to the speech of the first Norman kings. He does not notice what Ordericus Vitalis tells us of the Conqueror's meritorious attempt, which does not seem, however, to have been more successful than such experiments on the part of grown-up gentlemen usually are; so that he may be allowed to be correct enough in the assertion with which he sets out, that we have no information "that William the Bastard, his son Rufus, his daughter Maud, or his nephew Stephen, did or could speak the Anglo-Saxon or English language." Reference is then made to a story told in what is called Bromton's *Chronicle* respecting Henry II., which, however, is not very intelligible in all its parts, though Ritson has slurred over the difficulties. As Henry was passing through

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[1] Sir Francis Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 56.

[2] *Lect. in Libr. Sapient. Lect.*, ii. 4to, Paris, 1518; as referred to by Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, i. 5.

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[1] Quoted from MS. Harl. 1900, by Tyrwhitt, in Essay prefixed to his edition of *The Canterbury Tales.*

Wales, the old chronicler relates, on his return from Ireland in the spring of 1172, he found himself on a Sunday at the castle of Cardiff, and stopped there to hear mass; after which, as he was proceeding to mount his horse to be off again, there presented itself before him a somewhat singular apparition, a man with red hair and a round tonsure, lean and tall, attired in a white tunic and barefoot, who, addressing him in the Teutonic tongue, began, "Gode Olde Kinge,"[1] and proceeded to deliver a command from Christ, as he said, and his mother, from John the Baptist and Peter, that he should suffer no traffic or servile works to be done throughout his dominions on the sabbath-day, except only such as pertained to the use of food; "which command, if thou observest," concluded the speaker, "whatever thou mayest undertake thou shalt happily accomplish." The king immediately, speaking in French, desired the soldier who held the bridle of his horse to ask the rustic if he had dreamed all this. The soldier made the inquiry, as desired, in English; and then, it is added, the man replied in the same language as before, and addressing the king said, "Whether I have dreamed it or no, mark this day; for, unless thou shalt do what I have told thee, and amend thy life, thou shalt within a year's time hear such news as thou shalt mourn to the day of thy death." And, having so spoken, the man vanished out of sight. With the calamities which of course ensued to the doomed king we have here nothing to do. Although the chronicler reports only the three commencing words of the prophet's first address in what he calls the Teutonic tongue, there can be no doubt, we conceive, that the rest, though here translated into Latin, was also delivered in the same Teutonic (by which, apparently, can only have been meant the vernacular English, or what is commonly called Saxon). The man would not begin his speech in one language, and then suddenly break away into another. But if this was the case, Henry, from his reply, would appear to have understood English, though he might not be able to speak it. The two languages, thus subsisting together, were probably both understood by many of those who could only speak one of them. We have another evidence of this in the fact of the soldier, as we have seen, speaking English and also understanding the king's French. It is, we suppose, merely so much affectation or bad rhetoric in the chronicler that makes him vary his phrase for the same thing from "the Teutonic tongue" (*Teutonica lingua*) in one place to "English" (*Anglice*) in another, and immediately after to "the former language" (*lingua priori*); for the words which he gives as Teutonic are English words, and, when Henry desired the soldier to address the priest in English and the soldier did so, it must have been because that was the language in which he had addressed the king.

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[1] Henry and his son of the same name were commonly distinguished as the Old and the Young King from the date of the coronation of the latter (whom his father survived) in 1170.

"King Richard," Ritson proceeds, "is never known to have uttered a single English word, unless one may rely on the evidence of Robert Mannyng for the express words, when, of Isaac King of Cyprus, 'O dele,' said the king, 'this is a fole Breton.' The latter expression seems proverbial, whether it alludes to the Welsh or to the Armoricans, because Isaac was neither by birth, though he might be both by folly. Many great nobles of England, in this century, were utterly ignorant of the English language." As an instance, he mentions the case, before noticed by Tyrwhitt, of William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, chancellor and prime minister to Richard I., who, according to a remarkable account in a letter of his contemporary Hugh bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden, did not know a word of English. The only fact relating to this subject in connection with John or his reign that Ritson brings forward, is the speech which that king's ambassador, as related by Matthew Paris, made to the King of Morocco:—"Our nation is learned in three idioms, that is to say, Latin, French, and English." This would go to support the conclusion that both the French and the Latin languages were at this time not unusually spoken by persons of education in England. But, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Parisian rather than Norman French was the prevailing fashion, the language being taught rather as the tongue of scholarship, *i.e.* of the University of Paris, whither all English students repaired, than as the speech of the conquerors. English seems frequently to have been understood by the predominating race even when they did not speak it. The struggle for power among William's sons hastened the fusion of the race, and marked distinctions between the peoples end with the reign of Henry II. The loss of Normandy early in the thirteenth century arrested direct Norman influence.

There was emphatically *no* conscious attempt to put down the English language; and its early revival is manifest in that statute of Edward III., which decrees that pleading in the law courts should henceforth be carried on in English. Finally, written English is officially recognized by the proclamation of Henry III. relative to the Provisions of Oxford in 1258.

VERNACULAR LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.—A.D. 1066–1216

From the Norman Conquest to the termination of the reign of the seventh Norman sovereign, King John, is almost exactly a century and a half, even to a day. The victory of Hastings was gained on October 14, 1066, and John died on October 19, 1216. His death, happening at the time it did, was probably an event of the greatest importance. The system of government established by the Conquest,—a system of pure monarchy or absolutism—had been formally brought to an end the year before by the grant of the Great Charter wrung from the crown by the baronage. With the Charter, and the death of the last despotic king, from whom it was extorted, begins another order of things both political and social. It may be likened to the passing away of the night and the dawning of a new day. In particular, the Charter may be said to have consummated by a solemn legislative fiat the blending and incorporation of the two races, the conquerors and the conquered, which had been actively going on without any such sanction, and under the natural influence of circumstances only, throughout the preceding half-century,—having commenced, we may reckon, perhaps, half a century earlier, or about the middle of the reign of Henry I. There is, at least, not a word in this law making the least reference to any distinction between the two races. Both are spoken of throughout only as English; the nation is again recognized as one, as fully as it had been before either William the Norman or Canute the Dane.

We have thus four successive periods of about half a century each :—The First, from the Danish to the Norman Conquest,—half English, half Danish; the Second, from the Norman Conquest to the middle of the reign of Henry I, in which the subjugated English and their French or Norman rulers were completely divided; the Third and Fourth extending to the date of Magna Charta, and presenting, the former the comparatively slow, the latter the accelerated, process of the intermixture and fusion of the two races.

What was the history of the vernacular language for this first century and a half after the Norman Conquest, throughout which everything native would thus seem to have been in a course of gradual re-emergence from the general foreign inundation that had overwhelmed the country? We have no historical record or statement as to this matter: the question can only be answered, in so far as it can be answered at all, from an examination of such compositions of the time in the vernacular tongue as may have come down to us.

The principal literature produced in England during this period was in the Latin and French languages. In the former were written most works on subjects of theology, philosophy, and history; in the latter most of those intended rather to amuse than to inform, and addressed, not to students and professional readers, but to the idlers of the court and the upper classes, by whom they were seldom actually read, or much expected to be read, but only listened to as they were recited or chanted (for most of them were in verse) by others. How far over society such a knowledge of the imported tongue came to extend as was requisite for the understanding and enjoyment of what was thus written in it has been matter of dispute.

It is, at all events, this French literature only that is to be considered as having come into competition with the old vernacular literature. The employment of the Latin language in writing by monks, secular churchmen, and other persons who had had a learned education, was what had always gone on in England as in every other country of Western Christendom; there was nothing new in that; we continue to have it after the Conquest just as we had it before the Conquest. But it is quite otherwise with the writing of French.

To whatever portion of society in England an acquaintance with this French literature was confined, it is evident that it was for some time after the Conquest the only literature of the day that, without addressing itself exclusively to the learned classes, still demanded some measure of cultivation in its readers or auditors as well as in its authors. It was the only popular literature that was not adapted to the mere populace. We might infer this even from the fact that, if any other ever existed, it has mostly perished. The various metrical chronicles, romances, and other compositions in the French tongue, a good many of which are still extant, are very nearly the only literary works which have come down to us from this age. And, while the mass of this produce is, as we have said, very considerable, we have distinct notices of much more which is now lost. How the French language should have acquired the position which it thus appears to have held in England for some time after the Conquest is easily explained. The advantage which it derived from being the language of the court, of the entire body of the nobility, and of the opulent and influential classes generally, is obvious. This not only gave it the prestige and attraction of what we now call fashion, but, in the circumstances to which the country was reduced, would very speedily make it the only language in which any kind of regular or grammatical training could be obtained.

There was only one great advantage possessed by the national tongue with which it was impossible for the other in the long run to cope. This was the fact of its being the national tongue, the speech, actual and ancestral, of the great body of the people. Even that, indeed, might not have enabled it to maintain its ground if it had been a mere unwritten form of speech. But it had been cultivated and trained for centuries both by the practice of composition, in prose as well as in verse, and by the application to it of the art of the grammarian. It already possessed a literature considerable in volume, and embracing a variety of departments. It was not merely something floating upon men's breath, but had a substantial existence in poems and histories, in libraries and parchments. In that state it might cease, in the storm of national calamity, to be generally either written or read, but even its more literary inflexions and constructions would be less likely to fall into complete and universal oblivion. The memory, at least, of its old renown would not altogether die away; and that alone would be found to be much when, after a time, it began to be again, although in a somewhat altered form, employed in writing.

The nature of the altered form which distinguishes the written vernacular tongue when it reappears after the Norman Conquest from the aspect it presents before that date (or the earliest modern English from what is commonly designated Saxon or Anglo-Saxon) is not matter of dispute. It was, in fact, the conversion of an inflectional into a non-inflectional, of a synthetic into an analytic, language. The syntactical connection of words, and the modification of the mental conceptions which they represent, was indicated, no longer, in general, by those variations which constitute what are called declension and conjugation, but by separate particles, or simply by juxtaposition; and whatever seemed to admit of being neglected without injury to the prime object of expressing the meaning of the speaker, or writer,—no matter what other purposes it might serve of a merely ornamental or artistic nature—was ruthlessly dispensed with.

A change such as this is unquestionably the breaking up of a language. In the first instance, at least, it amounts to the destruction of much that is most characteristic of the language,—of all that constitutes its beauty to the educated mind, imbued with a feeling for the literature into which it has been wrought,—of something, probably, even of its precision as well as of its expressiveness in a higher sense. It may be that, as is commonly assumed, a synthetic tongue is essentially a nobler and more effective instrument of expression than an analytic one,—that, often comprising a whole sentence, or at least a whole clause, in a word, it presents thoughts and emotions in flashes and pictures where the other can only employ comparatively dead conventional signs. But perhaps the comparison has been too commonly made between the synthetic tongue in its perfection and the analytic one while only in its rudimentary state. The language may be considered to have changed its constitution, somewhat like a country which should have ceased to be a monarchy and become a republic.

THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.—ASCENDANCY OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

Ever since the appearance of Peter Lombard's *Four Books of Sentences*, about the middle of the twelfth century, a struggle for ascendancy had been going on throughout Europe between the Scholastic Theology, or new philosophy, and the grammatical and rhetorical studies with which men had previously been chiefly occupied. At first the natural advantages of its position told in favour of the established learning; nay an impulse and a new inspiration were probably given to poetry and the belles-lettres for a time by the competition of logic and philosophy, and the general intellectual excitement thus produced: it was in the latter part of the twelfth century that the writing of Latin verse was cultivated with the greatest success; it was at the very end of that century that Geoffrey de Vinsauf, or de Vino Salvo, composed and published his poem on the restoration of the legitimate mode of versification, under the title of *Nova Poetria*, or the New Poetry. But from about this date the tide began to turn; and the first half of the thirteenth century may be described as the era of the decline and fall of elegant literature, and the complete reduction of studious minds under the dominion of the scholastic logic and metaphysics.

In the University of Paris, and it was doubtless the same elsewhere, from about the middle of the thirteenth century, the ancient classics seem nearly to have ceased to be read; and all that was taught of rhetoric, or even of grammar, consisted of a few lessons from Priscian. The habit of speaking Latin correctly and elegantly, which had been so common an accomplishment of the scholars of the last age, was now generally lost: even at the universities, the classic tongue was corrupted into a base jargon, in which frequently all grammar and syntax were disregarded. This universal revolt from the study of words and of æsthetics to that of thoughts and of things is the most remarkable event in the intellectual history of the species. Undoubtedly all its results were not evil. On the whole, it was most probably the salvation even of that learning and elegant literature which it seemed for a time to have overwhelmed. The excitement of its very novelty awakened the minds of men. Never was there such a ferment of intellectual activity as now sprung up in Europe. The enthusiasm of the Crusades seemed to have been succeeded by an enthusiasm of study, which equally impelled its successive inundations of devotees. In the beginning of the fourteenth century there were thirty thousand students at the University of Oxford; and that of Paris could probably boast of the attendance of a still vaster multitude. This was something almost like a universal diffusion of education and knowledge. The brief revival of elegant literature in the twelfth century was a premature spring, which could not last. The preliminary processes of vegetation were not sufficiently advanced to sustain any general or enduring efflorescence; nor was the state of the world such as to call for or admit of any extensive spread of the kind of scholarship then cultivated. The probability is, that, even if nothing else had taken its place, it would have gradually become feebler in character, as well as confined within a narrower circle of cultivators, till it had altogether evaporated and disappeared. The excitement of the new learning, turbulent and in some respects debasing as it was, saved Western Europe from the complete extinction of the light of scholarship and philosophy which would in that case have ensued, and kept alive the spirit of intellectual culture, though in the meanwhile imprisoned and limited in its vision, for a happier future time when it should have ampler scope and full freedom of range.

Almost the only studies now cultivated by the common herd of students were the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. Yet it was not till after a struggle of some length that the supremacy of Aristotle was established in the schools. The most ancient statutes of the University of Paris that have been preserved, those issued by the pope's legate, Robert de Courçon, in 1215, prohibited the reading either of the metaphysical or the physical works of that philosopher, or of any abridgment of them. This, however, it has been remarked, was a mitigation of the treatment these books had met with a few years before, when all the copies of them that could be found were ordered to be thrown into the fire.[1] Still more lenient was a decree of Pope Gregory IX. in 1231, which only ordered the reading of them to be suspended until they should have undergone correction. Certain heretical notions in religion, promulgated or suspected to have been entertained by some of the most zealous of the early Aristotelians, had awakened the apprehensions of the church; but the general orthodoxy of their successors quieted these fears; and in course of time the authority of the Stagirite was universally recognized both in theology and in the profane sciences.

Some of the most distinguished of the scholastic doctors of this period were natives of Britain. Such, in particular, were Alexander de Hales, styled the Irrefragable, an English Franciscan, who died at Paris in 1245, and who is famous as the master of St. Bonaventura, and the first of the long list of commentators on the *Four Books of the Sentences*; the Subtle Doctor, John Duns Scotus, also a Franciscan and the chief glory of that order, who, after teaching with unprecedented popularity and applause at Oxford and Paris, died at Cologne in 1308, at the early age of forty-three, leaving a mass of writings, the very quantity of which would be sufficiently wonderful, even if they were not marked by a vigour and penetration of thought which, down to our own day, has excited the admiration of all who have examined them; and William Occam, the Invincible, another Franciscan, the pupil of Scotus, but afterwards his opponent on the great philosophical question of the origin and nature of Universals or General Terms, which so long divided, and still divides, logicians. Occam, who died at Munich in 1347, was the restorer, and perhaps the most able defender that the Middle Ages produced of the doctrine of Nominalism, or the opinion that general notions are merely names, and not real existences, as was contended by the Realists. The side taken by Occam was that of the minority in his own day, and for many ages after, and his views accordingly were generally regarded as heterodox in the schools; but his high merits have been recognized in modern times, when perhaps the greater number of speculators have come over to his way of thinking.

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[1] Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 313.

MATHEMATICAL AND OTHER STUDIES

In the mathematical and physical sciences, Roger Bacon is the great name of the thirteenth century, and indeed the greatest that either his country or Europe can produce for some centuries after this time. He was born at Ilchester about the year 1214, and died in 1292. His writings that are still preserved, of which the principal is that entitled his *Opus Majus* (or Greater Work), show that the range of his investigations included theology, grammar, the ancient languages, geometry, astronomy, chronology, geography, music, optics, mechanics, chemistry, and most of the other branches of experimental philosophy. In all these sciences he had mastered whatever was then known; and his knowledge, though necessarily mixed with much error, extended in various directions considerably further than, but for the evidence of his writings, we should have been warranted in believing that scientific researches had been carried in that age. In optics, for instance, he not only understood the general laws of reflected and refracted light, and had at least conceived such an instrument as a telescope, but he makes some advances towards an explanation of the phenomena of the rainbow. It may be doubted whether what have been sometimes called his inventions and discoveries in mechanics and in chemistry were for the greater part more than notions he had formed of the possibility of accomplishing certain results; but, even regarded as mere speculations or conjectures, many of his statements of what might be done show that he was familiar with mechanical principles, and possessed considerable acquaintance with the powers of natural agents. He appears to have been acquainted with the effects and composition of gunpowder, which indeed there is other evidence for believing to have been then known in Europe. Bacon's notions on the right method of philosophizing are remarkably enlightened for the times in which he lived; and his general views upon most subjects evince a penetration and liberality much beyond the spirit of his age. With all his sagacity and freedom from prejudice, indeed, he was a believer both in astrology and alchemy; but, as it has been observed, these delusions did not then stand in the same predicament as now: they were "irrational only because unproved, and neither impossible nor unworthy of the investigation of a philosopher, in the absence of preceding experiments."[1]

Another eminent English cultivator of mathematical science in that age was the celebrated Robert Grosseteste, or Grostête, or Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln, the friend and patron of Bacon. Grostête, who died in 1253, and of whom we shall have more to say presently, is the author of a treatise on the sphere, which had been printed. A third name that deserves to be mentioned along with these is that of Sir Michael Scott, famous in popular tradition as a practitioner of the occult sciences, but whom his writings, of which several are extant, and have been printed, prove to have been possessed of acquirements, both in science and literature, of which few in those times could boast. He is commonly assumed to have been proprietor of the estate of Balwearie, in Fife, and to have survived till near the close of the thirteenth century; but all that is certain is that he was a native of Scotland, and one of the most distinguished of the learned persons who flourished at the court of the Emperor Frederick II., who died in 1250.[2] Like Roger Bacon, Scott was addicted to the study of alchemy and astrology; but these were in his eyes also parts of natural philosophy. Among other works, a *History of Animals* is ascribed to him; and he is said to have translated several of the works of Aristotle from the Greek into Latin, at the command of the Emperor Frederick. He is reputed to have been eminently skilled both in astronomy and medicine; and a contemporary, John Bacon, himself known by the title of Prince of the Averroists, or followers of the Arabian doctor Averroes, celebrates him as a great theologian.[3]

These instances, however, were rare exceptions to the general rule. Metaphysics and logic, together with divinity—which was converted into little else than a subject of metaphysical and logical contention—so occupied the crowd of intellectual inquirers, that, except the professional branches of law and medicine, scarcely any other studies were generally attended to. Roger Bacon himself tells us that he knew of only two good mathematicians among his contemporaries—one John of Leyden, who had been a pupil of his own, and another whom he does not name, but who is supposed to have been John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury. Few students of science, he says, proceeded further than the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid—the well-known asses' bridge. The study of geometry was still confounded in the popular understanding with the study of magic—a proof that it was a very rare pursuit. In arithmetic, although the Arabic numerals had found their way to Christian Europe before the middle of the fourteenth century, they do not appear to have come into general use till a considerably later date. Astronomy, however, was sufficiently cultivated at the University of Paris to enable some of the members to predict an eclipse of the sun which happened on the 31st of January, 1310.[1] This science was indebted for part of the attention it received to the belief that was universally entertained in the influence of the stars over human affairs. And, as astrology led to the cultivation and improvement of astronomy, so the other imaginary science of alchemy undoubtedly aided the progress of chemistry and medicine. Besides Roger Bacon and Michael Scott in the thirteenth century, England contributes the names of John Daustein, of Richard, and of Cremer abbot of Westminster, the disciple and friend of the famous Raymond Lully, to the list of the writers on alchemy in the fourteenth. Lully himself visited England in the reign of Edward I., on the invitation of the king; and he affirms in one of his works, that, in the secret chamber of St. Katherine in the Tower of London, he performed in the royal presence the experiment of transmuting some crystal into a mass of diamond, or adamant as he calls it, of which Edward, he says, caused some little pillars to be made for the tabernacle of God. It was popularly believed, indeed, at the time, that the English king had been furnished by Lully with a great quantity of gold for defraying the expense of an expedition he intended to make to the Holy Land. Edward III. was not less credulous on the subject than his grandfather, as appears by an order which he issued in 1329, in the following terms :—"Know all men, that we have been assured that John of Rous and Master William of Dalby know how to make silver by the art of alchemy ; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it; and, considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metal, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well-beloved Thomas Cary to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody." The earliest English writer on medicine, whose works have been printed, is Gilbert English (or Anglicus), who flourished in the thirteenth century; and he was followed in the next century by John de Gaddesden. The practice of medicine had now been taken in a great measure out of the hands of the clergy ; but the art was still in the greater part a mixture of superstition and quackery, although the knowledge of some useful remedies, and perhaps also of a few principles, had been obtained from the writings of the Arabic physicians (many of which had been translated into Latin) and from the instructions delivered in the schools of Spain and Italy. The distinction between the physician and the apothecary was already well understood. Surgery also began to be followed as a separate branch : some works are still extant, partly printed, partly in manuscript, by John Ardern, or Arden, an eminent English surgeon, who practised at Newark in the fourteenth century. A lively picture of the state of the surgical art at this period is given by a French writer, Guy de Cauliac, in a system of surgery which he published in 1363 : "The practitioners in surgery," he says, "are divided into five sects. The first follow Roger and Roland, and the four masters, and apply poultices to all wounds and abscesses ; the second follow Brunus and Theodoric, and in the same cases use wine only ; the third follow Saliceto and Lafranc, and treat wounds with ointments and soft plasters ; the fourth are chiefly Germans, who attend the armies, and promiscuously use charms, potions, oil, and wool ; the fifth are old women and ignorant people, who have recourse to the saints in all cases."

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[1] *Penny Cyclopædia*, iii. 243. Bacon's principal work, the *Opus Majus*, was published by Dr. Jebb, in a folio volume, at London in 1773; and several of his other treatises had been previously printed at Francfort, Paris, and elsewhere. His *Opus Minus* has also now been edited by Professor Brewer, of King's College, London, and forms one of the volumes of the series entitled *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*; published by the authority of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, 8vo. London, 1857, &c.

[2] See article in *Penny Cyclopædia*, xxi. 101.

[3] See an article on Michael Scott in Bayle.

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[1] Crevier, ii. 224.

Yet the true method of philosophizing, by experiment and the collection of facts, was almost as distinctly and emphatically laid down in this age by Roger Bacon, as it was more than three centuries afterwards by his illustrious namesake. Much knowledge, too, must necessarily have been accumulated in various departments by the actual application of this method. Some of the greatest of the modern chemists have bestowed the highest praise on the manner in which the experiments of the alchemists, or hermetic philosophers, as they called themselves, on metals and other natural substances appear to have been conducted. In another field—namely, in that of geography, and the institutions, customs, and general state of distant countries—a great deal of new information must have been acquired from the accounts that were now published by various travellers, especially by Marco Polo, who penetrated as far as to Tartary and China, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and by our countryman, Sir John Mandevil, who also traversed a great part of the East about a hundred years later. Roger Bacon has inserted a very curious epitome of the geographical knowledge of his time in his *Opus Majus*.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

About the middle of the thirteenth century, both in England and elsewhere, the universities began to assume a new form, by the erection of colleges for the residence of their members as separate communities. The zeal for learning that was displayed in these endowments is the most honourable characteristic of the age. Before the end of the fourteenth century the following colleges were founded at Oxford:—University Hall, by William, archdeacon of Durham, who died in 1249; Baliol College, by John Baliol, father of King John of Scotland, about 1263; Merton College, by Walter Merton, bishop of Rochester, in 1268; Exeter College, by Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, about 1315; Oriel College, originally called the Hall of the Blessed Virgin of Oxford, by Edward II. and his almoner, Adam de Brom, about 1324; Queen's College, by Robert Eglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, in 1340; and New College, in 1379, by the celebrated William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, the munificent founder also of Winchester School or College. In the University of Cambridge the foundations were, Peter House, by Hugh Balsham, subprior and afterwards bishop of Ely, about 1256; Michael College (afterwards incorporated with Trinity College), by Herby de Stanton, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II., about 1324; University Hall (soon afterwards burnt down), by Richard Badew, Chancellor of the University, in 1326; King's Hall (afterwards united to Trinity College), by Edward III.; Clare Hall, a restoration of University Hall, by Elizabeth de Clare, Countess of Ulster, about 1347; Pembroke Hall, or the Hall of Valence and Mary, in the same year, by Mary de St. Paul, widow of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke; Trinity Hall, in 1350, by William Bateman, bishop of Norwich; Gonvil Hall, about the same time, by Edmond Gonvil, parson of Terrington and Rushworth, in Norfolk; and Corpus Christi, or Bene't (that is, Benedict) College, about 1351, by the United Guilds of Corpus Christi and St. Mary, in the town of Cambridge. The erection of these colleges, besides the accommodations which they afforded in various ways both to teachers and students, gave a permanent establishment to the universities, which they scarcely before possessed. The original condition of these celebrated seats of learning, in regard to all the conveniences of teaching, appears to have been humble in the extreme. Great disorders and scandals are also said to have arisen, before the several societies were thus assembled each within its own walls, from the intermixture of the students with the townspeople, and their exemption from all discipline. But, when the members of the University were counted by tens of thousands, discipline, even in the most favourable circumstances, must have been nearly out of the question. The difficulty would not be lessened by the general character of the persons composing the learned mob, if we may take it from the quaint historian of the University of Oxford. Many of them, Anthony à Wood affirms, were mere "varlets who pretended to be scholars"; he does not scruple to charge them with being habitually guilty of thieving and other enormities; and he adds, "They lived under no discipline, neither had any tutors, but only for fashion sake would sometimes thrust themselves into the schools at ordinary lectures, and, when they went to perform any mischiefs, then would they be accounted scholars, that so they might free themselves from the jurisdiction of the burghers." To repress the evils of this state of things, the old statutes of the University of Paris, in 1215, had ordained that no one should be reputed a scholar who had not a certain master. Another of these ancient regulations may be quoted in illustration of the simplicity of the times, and of the small measure of pomp and circumstance that the heads of the commonwealth of learning could then affect. It is ordered that every master reading lectures in the faculty of arts should have his cloak or gown round, black, and falling as low as the heels—"at least," adds the statute, with amusing *naïveté*, "while it is new." But this famous seminary long continued to take pride in its poverty as one of its most honourable distinctions. There is something very noble and affecting in the terms in which the rector and masters of the faculty of arts are found petitioning, in 1362, for a postponement of the hearing of a cause in which they were parties. "We have difficulty," they say, "in finding the money to pay the procurators and advocates, whom it is necessary for us to employ—*we whose profession it is to possess no wealth*."[1] Yet, when funds were wanted for important purposes in connection with learning or science, they were supplied in this age with no stinted liberality. We have seen with what alacrity opulent persons came forward to build and endow colleges, as soon as the expediency of such foundations came to be perceived. In almost all these establishments more or less provision was made for the permanent maintenance of a body of poor scholars, in other words, for the admission of even the humblest classes to a share in the benefits of that learned education whose temples and priesthood were thus planted in the land. It is probable, also, that the same kind of liberality was often shown in other ways. Roger Bacon tells us himself that, in the twenty years in which he had been engaged in his experiments, he had spent in books and instruments no less a sum than two thousand French livres, an amount of silver equal to about six thousand pounds of our present money, and in effective value certainly to many times that sum. He must have been indebted for these large supplies to the generosity of rich friends and patrons.

CULTIVATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE LEARNED TONGUES IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

Notwithstanding the general neglect of its elegancies, and of the habit of speaking it correctly or grammatically, the Latin tongue still continued to be in England, as elsewhere, the common language of the learned, and that in which books were generally written that were intended for their perusal. Among this class of works may be included the contemporary chronicles, most of which were compiled in the monasteries, and the authors of almost all of which were churchmen.

Latin was also, for a great part of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the usual language of the law, at least in writing. There may, indeed, be some doubt perhaps as to the Charter of John. It is usually given in Latin; but there is

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[1] Crevier, ii. 404.

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also a French text first published in the first edition of D'Achery's *Spicilegium* (1653–57), xii. 573, &c., which there is some reason for believing to be the original. "An attentive critical examination of the French and Latin together," says Mr. Luders, "will induce any person capable of making it to think several chapters of the latter translated from the former, and not originally composed in Latin."[1] Yet the Capitula, or articles on which the Great Charter is founded, are known to us only in Latin. And all the other charters of liberties are in that language. So is every statute down to the year 1275. The first that is in French is the Statute of Westminster the First, passed in that year, the 3rd of Edward I. Throughout the remainder of the reign of Edward they are sometimes in Latin, sometimes in French, but more frequently in the former language. The French becomes more frequent in the time of Edward II., and is almost exclusively used in that of Edward III. and Richard II. Still there are statutes in Latin in the sixth and eighth years of the last-mentioned king. It is not improbable that, from the accession of Edward I., the practice may have been to draw up every statute in both languages. Of the law treatises, *Bracton* (about 1265) and *Fleta* (about 1285) are in Latin; *Britton* (about 1280) and the *Miroir des Justices* (about 1320) in French.

Latin was not only the language in which all the scholastic divines and philosophers wrote, but was also employed by all writers on geometry, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, and the other branches of mathematical and natural science. All the works of Roger Bacon, for example, are in Latin; and it is worth noting that, although by no means a writer of classical purity, this distinguished cultivator of science is still one of the most correct writers of his time. He was indeed not a less zealous student of literature than of science, nor less anxious for the improvement of the one than of the other: accustomed himself to read the works of Aristotle in the original Greek, he denounces as mischievous impositions the wretched Latin translations by which alone they were known to the generality of his contemporaries: he warmly recommends the study of grammar and the ancient languages generally; and deplores the little attention paid to the Oriental tongues in particular, of which he says there were not in his time more than three or four persons in Western Europe who knew anything. It is remarkable that the most strenuous effort made within the present period to revive the study of this last-mentioned learning proceeded from another eminent cultivator of natural science, the famous Raymond Lully, half philosopher, half quack, as it has been the fashion to regard him. It was at his instigation that Clement V., in 1311, with the approbation of the Council of Vienne, published a constitution, ordering that professors of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic should be established in the universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca. He had, more than twenty years before, urged the same measure upon Honorius IV., and its adoption then was only prevented by the death of that pope. After all, it is doubtful if the papal ordinance was ever carried into effect. There were, however, professors of strange, or foreign, languages at Paris a few years after this time, as appears from an epistle of Pope John XXII. to his legate there in 1325, in which the latter is enjoined to keep watch over the said professors, lest they should introduce any dogmas as strange as the languages they taught.[1]

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[1] *Tracts on the Law and History of England* (1810), p. 393. D'Achery's French text may also be read in a more common book, Johnson's *History of Magna Charta*, 2nd edit. (1772), pp. 182–234.

Many additional details are collected by Warton in his *Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into England.* He is inclined to think that many Greek manuscripts found their way into Europe from Constantinople in the time of the Crusades. "Robert Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln," he proceeds, "an universal scholar, and no less conversant in polite letters than the most abstruse sciences, cultivated and patronized the study of the Greek language. This illustrious prelate, who is said to have composed almost two hundred books, read lectures in the school of the Franciscan friars at Oxford about the year 1230. He translated *Dionysius the Areopagite* and *Damascenus* into Latin. He greatly facilitated the knowledge of Greek by a translation of Suidas's *Lexicon*, a book in high repute among the lower Greeks, and at that time almost a recent compilation. He promoted John of Basingstoke to the archdeaconry of Leicester, chiefly because he was a Greek scholar, and possessed many Greek manuscripts, which he is said to have brought from Athens into England. He entertained, as a domestic in his palace, Nicholas, chaplain of the abbot of St. Albans, surnamed *Græcus*, from his uncommon proficiency in Greek; and by his assistance he translated from Greek into Latin the testaments of the twelve patriarchs.

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[1] Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, ii. 112, 227.

Grosthead had almost incurred the censure of excommunication for preferring a complaint to the pope that most of the opulent benefices in England were occupied by Italians. But the practice, although notoriously founded on the monopolizing and arbitrary spirit of papal imposition, and a manifest act of injustice to the English clergy, probably contributed to introduce many learned foreigners into England, and to propagate philological literature."[1] "Bishop Grosthead," Warton adds, "is also said to have been profoundly skilled in the Hebrew language. William the Conqueror permitted great numbers of Jews to come over from Rouen, and to settle in England, about the year 1087. Their multitude soon increased, and they spread themselves in vast bodies throughout most of the cities and capital towns in England, where they built synagogues. There were fifteen hundred at York about the year 1189. At Bury in Suffolk is a very complete remain of a Jewish synagogue of stone, in the Norman style, large and magnificent. Hence it was that many of the learned English ecclesiastics of those times became acquainted with their books and language. In the reign of William Rufus, at Oxford the Jews were remarkably numerous, and had acquired a considerable property; and some of their rabbis were permitted to open a school in the university, where they instructed not only their own people, but many Christian students, in the Hebrew literature, about the year 1054. Within two hundred years after their admission or establishment by the Conqueror, they were banished the kingdom. This circumstance was highly favourable to the circulation of their learning in England. The suddenness of their dismission obliged them, for present subsistence, and other reasons, to sell their movable goods of all kinds, among which were large quantities of Rabbinical books. The monks in various parts availed themselves of the distribution of these treasures. At Huntingdon and Stamford there was a prodigious sale of their effects, containing immense stores of Hebrew manuscripts, which were immediately purchased by Gregory of Huntingdon, prior of the abbey of Ramsey. Gregory speedily became an adept in the Hebrew, by means of these valuable acquisitions, which he bequeathed to his monastery about the year 1250. Other members of the same convent, in consequence of these advantages, are said to have been equal proficients in the same language, soon after the death of Prior Gregory; among whom were Robert Dodford, librarian of

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[1] *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, i. cxxxv.

Ramsey, and Laurence Holbeck, who compiled a Hebrew Lexicon. At Oxford, great multitudes of their books fell into the hands of Roger Bacon, or were bought by his brethren, the Franciscan friars of that university."[1] The general expulsion of the Jews from England did not take place till the year 1290, in the reign of Edward I.; but they had been repeatedly subjected to sudden violence, both from the populace and from the government, before that grand catastrophe.

LAST AGE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND

The French language, however, was still in common use among us down to the latter part of the reign of Edward III. It is well remarked by Pinkerton that we are to date the cessation of the general use of French in this country from the breaking out of "the inveterate enmity" between the two nations in the reign of that king.[2] Higden, as we have seen, writing before this change had taken place, tells us that French was still in his day the language which the children of gentlemen were taught to speak from their cradle, and the only language that was allowed to be used by boys at school; the effect of which was, that even the country people generally understood it and affected its use. The tone, however, in which this is stated by Higden indicates that the public feeling had already begun to set in against these customs, and that, if they still kept their ground from use and wont, they had lost their hold upon any firmer or surer stay. Accordingly about a quarter of a century or thirty years later his translator Trevisa finds it necessary to subjoin the following explanation or correction:—"This maner was myche yused tofore the first moreyn [before the first murrain or plague, which happened in 1349], and is siththe som dele [somewhat] ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maister of gramer, chaungide the lore [learning] in gramer scole and construction of [from] Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche. So that now, the yere of owre Lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde King Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of England children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an [in] Englisch, and haveth thereby avauntage in oon [one] side and desavauntage in another. Her [their] avauntage is, that thei lerneth her [their] gramer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do; desavauntage is, that now children of gramer scole kunneth [know] no more Frensch than can her lifte [knows their left] heele; and that is harm for hem [them], and [if] thei schul passe the see and travaile in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentilmen haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her [their] children Frensch."[1]

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[1] *His. Eng. Poet.*, i. cxxxvi.

[2] Essay on the Origin of Scotish Poetry, prefixed to *Ancient Scotish Poems*, 1786, vol. i. p. lxiii. Some curious remarks upon the peculiar political position in which England was held to stand in relation to France in the first reigns after the Conquest may be read in Gale's Preface to his *Scriptores Quindecim*.

A few years before this, in 1362 (the 36th of Edward III.), was passed the statute ordaining that all pleas pleaded in the king's courts should be pleaded in the English language, and entered and enrolled in Latin; the pleadings, or oral arguments, till now having been in French, and the enrolments of the judgments sometimes in French, sometimes in Latin. The reasons assigned for this change in the preamble of the act are: "Because it is often showed to the king by the prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commonalty, of the great mischiefs which have happened to divers of the realm, because the laws, customs, and statutes of this realm be not commonly holden and kept in the same realm, for that they be pleaded, shewed, and judged in the French tongue, which is much unknown in the said realm, so that the people which do implead, or be impleaded, in the king's court, and in the courts of other, have no knowledge nor understanding of that which is said for them or against them by their sergeants and other pleaders; and that reasonably the said laws and customs the rather shall be perceived and known, and better understood, in the tongue used in the said realm, and by so much every man of the said realm may the better govern himself without offending of the law, and the better keep, save, and defend his heritage and possessions; and in divers regions and countries, where the king, the nobles, and other of the said realm have been, good governance and full right is done to every person, because that their laws and customs be learned and used in the tongue of the country."

Yet, oddly enough, this very statute (of which we have here quoted the old translation) is in French, which, whatever might be the case with the great body of the people, continued down to a considerably later date than this to be the mother-tongue of our Norman royal family, and probably also that generally spoken at court and at least in the upper house of parliament. Ritson asserts that there is no instance in which Henry III. is known to have expressed himself in English. "King Edward I. generally," he continues, "or, according to Andrew of Wyntoun, constantly, spoke the French language, both in the council and in the field, many of his sayings in that idiom being recorded by our old historians. When, in the council at Norham, in 1291–92, Anthony Beck had, as it is said, proved to the king, by reason and eloquence, that Bruce was too dangerous a neighbour to be king of Scotland, his Majesty replied, *Par le sang de dieu, vous aves bien eschanté*, and accordingly adjudged the crown to Baliol; of whom, refusing to obey his summons, he afterwards said, *A ce fol felon tel folie fais? S'il ne voult venir à nous, nous viendrons à lui.*[1] There is but one instance of his speaking English; which was when the great sultan sent ambassadors, after his assassination, to protest that he had no knowledge of it. These, standing at a distance, adored the king, prone on the ground; and Edward said in English (*in Anglico*), *You, indeed, adore, but you little love, me.* Nor understood they his words, because they spoke to him by an interpreter.[2] King Edward II., likewise, who married a French princess, used himself the French tongue. Sir Henry Spelman had a manuscript, in which was a piece of poetry entitled *De le roi Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qu'il fist mesmes*, which Lord Orford was unacquainted with. His son Edward III. always wrote his letters or despatches in French, as we find them preserved by Robert of Avesbury; and in the early part of his reign even the Oxford scholars were confined in conversation to Latin or French.[3] . . . There is a single instance preserved of this monarch's use of the English language. He appeared in 1349 in a tournament at Canterbury with a white swan for his impress, and the following motto embroidered on his shield:—

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[1] As quoted by Tyrwhitt, from Harl. MS. 1900, in *Essay on the Language, &c., of Chaucer.*

Hay, hay, the wythe swan!
By Godes soul I am thy man![4]

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[1] For these two speeches, the latter of which, by-the-by, he points as if he did not understand it, Ritson quotes the *Scotichronicon* (Fordun), ii. 147, 156.

[2] For this anecdote Ritson quotes *Hemingford* (in Gale), p. 591.

[3] The authority for this last statement is a note in Warton's *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, I. 6 (edit. of 1824).

[4] See Warton's *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, ii. 251 (i. 86, in edit. of 1824). "He had another, 'It is as it is'; and may have had a third, 'Ha St. Edward! Ha St. George.'"

Lewis Beaumont, bishop of Durham, 1317, understood not a word of either Latin or English. In reading the bull of his appointment, which he had been taught to spell for several days before, he stumbled upon the word *metropolitice*, which he in vain endeavoured to pronounce; and, having hammered over it a considerable time, at last cried out, in his mother tongue, *Seit pour dite! Par Seynt Lowys il ne fu pas curteis qui ceste parole ici escrit*.[1] The first instance of the English language which Mr. Tyrwhitt had discovered in the parliamentary proceedings was the confession of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, in 1398. He might, however, have met with a petition of the mercers of London ten years earlier (*Rot. Parl.* iii. 225). The oldest English instrument produced by Rymer is dated 1368 (vii. 526); but an indenture in the same idiom betwixt the abbot and convent of Whitby, and Robert the son of John Bustard, dated at York in 1343,[2] is the earliest known."[3]

RE-EMERGENCE OF THE ENGLISH AS A LITERARY TONGUE

French metrical romances and other poetry continued to be written in England, and in many instances by Englishmen, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Down to the end of the twelfth century verse was probably the only form in which romances, meaning originally any compositions in the Romance or French language, then any narrative compositions whatever, were written: in the thirteenth, a few may have appeared in prose; but before the close of the fourteenth prose had become the usual form in which such works were produced, and many of the old metrical romances had been recast in this new shape. The early French prose romances, however, do not, like their metrical predecessors, belong in any sense to the literature of this country: many of them were no doubt generally read for a time in England as well as in France; but we have no reason for believing that any of them were primarily addressed to the English public, or were written in England or by English subjects, and even during the brief space that they continued popular they seem to have been regarded as foreign importations.

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[1] "Robert de Graystanes, *Anglia Sacra*, i. 761—'Take it as said! By St. Lewis, he was not very civil who wrote this word here.'"

[2] Charlton's *History of Whitby*, 247.

[3] *Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy*, pp. lxxv–lxxxvi. We have not thought it necessary to preserve Ritson's peculiar spelling, adopted, apparently, on no principle except that of deviating from the established usage.

For the last fifty years of the fourteenth century, however, the French language had been rapidly losing the position it had held among us from the middle of the eleventh, and becoming among all classes in England a foreign tongue. To the testimonies above produced of Higden writing immediately before the commencement of this change, and of Trevisa after it had been going on for about a quarter of a century, may be added what Chaucer writes, probably within ten years after the date (1385) which Trevisa expressly notes as that of his statement. In the Prologue to his *Testament of Love*, a prose work, which seems to have been far advanced, if not finished, in 1392, the great father of our English poetry, speaking of those of his countrymen who still persisted in writing French verse, expresses himself thus :—" Certes there ben some that speke thyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe." And afterwards he adds, " Let, then, clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye in science and the knowinge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly [natural] to theyr mouthes ; and let us shewe our fantasyes in such wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge." French, it is evident from this, although it might still be a common acquirement among the higher classes, had ceased to be the mother-tongue of any class of Englishmen, and was only known to those to whom it was taught by a master. So, the Prioress in the *Canterbury Tales*, although she could speak French " ful fayre and fetisly," or neatly, spoke it only

" After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire [her] unknowe."

From this, as from many other passages in old writers, we learn that the French taught and spoken in England had, as was indeed inevitable, become a corrupt dialect of the language, or at least very different from the French at Paris. But, as the foreign tongue lost its hold and declined in purity, the old Teutonic speech of the native population, favoured by the same circumstances and course of events which checked and depressed its rival, began to assume a new organization, and gradually recovered its ascendancy.

We have already examined the first revolution which the language underwent, and which consisted in the disintegration of the grammatical system of the language, and the conversion of it from an inflectional and synthetic into a comparatively non-inflected and analytic language.

The first revolution is to be carefully distinguished from the second, which was brought about by the combination of the native with a foreign element, and consisted essentially in the change made in the vocabulary of the language by the introduction of numerous terms borrowed from the French. Of this latter innovation we find little trace till long after the completion of the former. For nearly two centuries after the Conquest the English seems to have been spoken and written (to the small extent to which it was written) with scarcely any intermixture of Norman. It only, in fact, began to receive such intermixture after it came to be adopted as the speech of that part of the nation which had previously spoken French. The corruption of the English by the intermixture of French vocables must have proceeded from those whose original language was French, and who were in habits of constant intercourse with French customs, French literature, and everything else that was French, at the same time that they, occasionally at least, spoke English. And this supposition is in perfect accordance with the historical fact. So long as the English was the language of only a part of the nation, and the French, as it were, struggled with it for mastery, it remained unadulterated;—when it became the speech of the whole people, of the higher classes as well as of the lower, then it lost its old Teutonic purity, and received a larger alien admixture from the alien lips through which it passed. Whether this was a fortunate circumstance, or the reverse, is another question.

The commencement of this second revolution, which changed the very substance of the language, may most probably be dated from about the middle of the thirteenth century, or about a century and a half after the completion of the first.

During this transitional period the three main dialects of English persist. Scholars usually re-name them as the Northern, Southern, and Midland dialects. From 1200 Northern English was again in literary use. Southern English continued to be written; but the Midland was slowly becoming more prominent. We can study the Southern dialect in the *Lives of St. Katherine and St. Juliana*, the *Ancren Riwle* and *Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle*; the Kentish in the *Kentish Sermons*, and the *Ayenbite of Inwit*; the Midland in the *Ormulum*, in the *Bestiary*, Layamon's *Brut*, *Piers Plowman* and *Robert of Brunne's Chronicle*.

The Midland dialect begins to be recognized as the standard speech about the time of Chaucer. As the language of London it was bound to prevail. But it is not openly recognized as the supreme form of the language till 1589, when it is thus alluded to by George Puttenham in the *Art of English Poesie.*

MIDDLE ENGLISH

The chief remains that we have of English verse for the first two centuries after the Conquest have been enumerated by Sir Frederic Madden in a comprehensive paragraph of his valuable Introduction to the *Romance of Havelok*, which we will take leave to transcribe:—"The notices by which we are enabled to trace the rise of our Saxon poetry from the Saxon period to the end of the twelfth century are few and scanty. We may, indeed, comprise them all in the Song of Canute recorded by the monk of Ely [Hist. Elyens. p. 505 apud Gale], who wrote about 1166; the words put into the mouth of Aldred archbishop of York, who died in 1069 [W. Malmesb. de Gest. Pontif. l. i. p. 271]; the verses ascribed to St. Godric, the hermit of Finchale, who died in 1170 [Rits. Bibliogr. Poet.]; the few lines preserved by Lambarde and Camden attributed to the same period [Rits. Anc. Songs, Diss. p. xxviii.]; and the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189, as recorded by Benedict Abbas, Roger Hoveden, and the Chronicle of Lanercost [Rits. Metr. Rom. Diss. p. lxxiii.]. To the same reign of Henry II. are to be assigned the metrical compositions of Layamon [MS., Cott. Cal. A. ix., and Otho C. xiii.] and Orm. [MS. Jun. 1], and also the legends of St. Katherine, St. Margaret, and St. Julian [MS. Bodl. 34], with some few others, from which we may learn with tolerable accuracy the state of the language at that time, and its gradual formation from the Saxon to the shape it subsequently assumed. From this period to the middle of the next century nothing occurs to which we can affix any certain date; but we shall probably not err in ascribing to that interval the poems ascribed to John de Guldevorde [MSS. Cott. Cal. A. ix., Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29], the Biblical History [MS. Bennet Cant. R. 11] and Poetical Paraphrase of the Psalms [MSS. Cott. Vesp. D. vii., Coll. Benn. Cant. O. 6, Bodl. 921] quoted by

Warton, and the Moral Ode published by Hickes [MSS. Digby 4, Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29]. Between the years 1244 and 1258, we know, was written the versification of part of a meditation of St. Augustine, as proved by the age of the prior who gave the MS. to the Durham Library [MS. Eccl. Dun. A. iii. 12, and Bodl. 42]. Soon after this time also were composed the earlier Songs in Ritson and Percy (1264), with a few more pieces which it is unnecessary to particularize. This will bring us to the close of Henry III.'s reign and beginning of his successor's, the period assigned by our poetical antiquaries to the romances of Sir Tristrem, Kyng Horn, and Kyng Alesaunder."[1]

The verse that has been preserved of the song composed by Canute as he was one day rowing on the Nen, while the holy music came floating on the air and along the water from the choir of the neighbouring minster of Ely—a song which we are told by the historian continued to his day, after the lapse of a century and a half, to be a universal popular favourite[2]—is very nearly such English as was written in the fourteenth century. This interesting fragment properly falls to be given as the first of our specimens :—

Merie sungen the muneches binnen Elỳ
Tha Cnut Ching rew there by :
Roweth, cnihtes, noer the lant,
And here we thes muneches saeng.

That is, literally,—

Merry (sweetly) sung the monks within Ely
That (when) Cnute King rowed thereby :
Row, knights, near the land,
And hear we these monks' song.

The not very clerical address of Archbishop Aldred to Ursus Earl of Worcester, who refused to take down one of his castles the ditch of which encroached upon a monastic churchyard, consists, as reported by William of Malmesbury (who by-the-by praises its elegance) of only two short lines :—

Hatest thou[3] Urse?
Have thou God's curse.

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[1] *The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane*, Introduction, p. xlix. We have transferred the references, enclosed in brackets, from the bottom of the page to the text.

[2] Quæ usque hodie in choris publice cantantur, et in proverbiis memorantur.

[3] That is, Hightest thou (art thou called)? Malmesbury's Latin translation is, "Vocaris Ursus: habeas Dei maledictionem." But the first line seems to be interrogative.

The hymn of St. Godric has more of an antique character. It is thus given by Ritson, who professes to have collated the Royal MS. 5 F. vii., and the Harleian MS. 322, and refers also to *Matt. Parisiensis Historia*, pp. 119, 120, edit. 1640, and to (MS. Cott.) Nero D. v. :—

Sainte Marie [clane] virgine,
Moder Jhesu Cristes Nazarene,
On fo [*or* fong], schild, help thin Godric,
On fang bring hegilich with the in Godes riche.
Sainte Marie, Christe's bur,
Maidens clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie min sinne [*or* sennen], rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne with the selfd God.

"By the assistance of the Latin versions," adds Ritson, "one is enabled to give it literally in English, as follows:—Saint Mary [chaste] virgin, mother of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, take, shield, help thy Godric; take, bring him quickly with thee into God's kingdom. Saint Mary, Christ's chamber, purity of a maiden, flower of a mother, destroy my sin, reign in my mind, bring me to dwell with the only God."

Two other short compositions of the same poetical eremite are much in the same style. One is a couplet said to have been sung to him by the spirit or ghost of his sister, who appeared to him after her death and thus assured him of her happiness:—

Crist and Sainte Marie swa on scamel me iledde
That ic on this erde ne silde with mine bare fote itredde.

Which Ritson translates:—"Christ and Mary, thus supported, have me brought, that I on earth should not with my bare foot tread."

The other is a hymn to St. Nicholas:—

Sainte Nicholaes, Godes druth,
Tymbre us faire scone hus.
At thi burth, at thi bare,
Sainte Nicholaes, bring us wel there.

"That is," says Ritson, "Saint Nicholas, God's lover, build us a fair beautiful house. At thy birth, at thy bier, Saint Nicholas, bring us safely thither."

As for the rhymes given by Lambarde and Camden as of the twelfth century, they can hardly in the shape in which we have them be of anything like that antiquity: they are, in fact, in the common English of the sixteenth century. Lambarde (in his *Dictionary of England*, p. 36) tells us that a rabble of Flemings and Normans brought over in 1173 by Robert Earl of Leicester, when they were assembled on a heath near St. Edmonds Bury, "fell to dance and sing,

Hoppe Wylikin, hoppe Wyllykin,
Ingland is thyne and myne, &c."

Camden's story is that Hugh Bigott, Earl of Norfolk, in the reign of Stephen used to boast of the impregnable strength of his castle of Bungey after this fashion :—

"Were I in my castle of Bungey,
Upon the river of Waveney,
I would ne care for the king of Cockeney."

What Sir Frederick Madden describes as "the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189" is given by Ritson as follows :—

Whan thu sees in Here hert yreret,
Than sulen Engles in three be ydelet :
That an into Yrland al to late waie,
That other into Puille mid prude bileve,
The thridde into Airhahen herd all wreken drechegen.

These lines, which he calls a "specimen of English poetry, apparently of the same age" (the latter part of the twelfth century), Ritson says are preserved by Benedictus Abbas, by Hoveden, and by the *Chronicle* of Lanercost ; and he professes to give them, and the account by which they are introduced, from "the former," by which he means the first of the three. But in truth the verses do not occur as he has printed them in any of the places to which he refers. And there is no ground for supposing, that they were ever inscribed or set up upon any house at "Here" or elsewhere. What is said both by Benedict and Hoveden (who employ nearly the same words) is simply that the figure of a hart was set upon the pinnacle of the house, in order, as was believed, that the prophecy contained in the verses might be accomplished—which prophecy, we are told immediately before, had been found engraven in ancient characters upon stone tables in the neighbourhood of the place. It is clearly intended to be stated that the prophecy was much older than the building of the house, and the erection of the figure of a stag, in the year 1190.

THE 'BRUT' OF LAYAMON

Layamon tells us himself that he was a priest, and that he resided at Ernley, near Radstone, or Redstone, which appears to have been what is now called Arley Regis, or Lower Arley, on the western bank of the Severn, in Worcestershire. He seems to say that he was employed in the services of the church at that place:—"ther he bock radde" (there he book read). And the only additional information that he gives us respecting himself is, that his father's name was Leovenath (or Leuca, as it is given in the later of the two texts).

Layamon's book is a descendant from the *Historia Britonum* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, composed not later than 1147. Geoffrey pretends a Celtic original. Be that as it may, his history contains the origins of the story of *King Lear*, and of part of *Comus*, while it encloses a mass of Arthurian matter.

Before 1150 the work was turned into French, first by Geoffrey Gaimar, then by Wace of Jersey, who added to the substance. Layamon translated Wace into English, with new romantic and historical matter, drawn partly from Bæda, partly from tradition.

The Celtic or British version is of unknown date; the Latin is of the earlier, the French of the latter, half of the twelfth century; and that of Layamon would appear to have been completed in the first years of the thirteenth. We shall encounter a second English translation from Wace's French before the middle of the fourteenth.

The existence of Layamon's *Chronicle* had long been known, but it had attracted very little attention till comparatively recent times. It is merely mentioned even by Warton and Tyrwhitt—the latter only remarking (in his *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*), that, "though the greatest part of this work of Layamon resembles the old Saxon poetry, without rhyme or metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses of unequal lengths, but rhyming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllabic measure of his French original." George Ellis, in his *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, originally published in 1790, was, we believe, the first to introduce Layamon to the general reader, by giving an extract of considerable length, with explanatory annotations, from what he described as his "very curious work," which, he added, never had been, and probably never would be, printed. Subsequently another considerable specimen, in every way much more carefully and learnedly edited, and accompanied with a literal translation throughout into the modern idiom, was presented by Mr. Guest in his *History of English Rhythms*, 1838 (ii. 113–23). But the whole work has been edited by Sir Frederic Madden for the Society of Antiquaries of London, in three volumes 8vo. 1847.

This splendid publication, besides a Literal Translation, Notes, and a Grammatical Glossary, contains the *Brut* in two texts, separated from each other by an interval apparently of about half a century, and, whether regarded in reference to the philological, to say nothing of the historical, value and importance of Layamon's work, or to the admirable and altogether satisfactory manner in which the old chronicle is exhibited and illustrated, may fairly be characterized as by far the most acceptable present that has been made to the students of early English literature in our day.

His editor conceives that we may safely assume Layamon's English to be that of North Worcestershire, the district in which he lived and wrote. But this western dialect, he contends, was also that of the southern part of the island, having in fact originated to the south of the Thames, whence, he says, it gradually extended itself "as far as the course of the Severn, the Wye, the Tame, and the Avon, and more or less pervaded the counties of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire,"—besides prevailing "throughout the channel counties from east to west,"—notwithstanding that several of the counties that have been named, and that of Worcester especially, had belonged to the non-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. "The language of Layamon," he further holds, "belongs to that transition period in which the groundwork of Anglo-Saxon phraseology and grammar still existed, although gradually yielding to the influence of the popular forms of speech. We find in it, as in the later portion of the *Saxon Chronicle*, marked indications of a tendency to adopt those terminations and sounds which characterize a language in a state of change, and which are apparent also in some other branches of the Teutonic tongue." As showing "the progress made in the course of two centuries in departing from the ancient and purer grammatical forms, as found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts," he mentions "the use of *a* as an article;—the change of the Anglo-Saxon terminations *a* and *an* into *e* and *en*, as well as the disregard of inflexions and genders;—the masculine forms given to neuter nouns in the plural;—the neglect of the feminine terminations of adjectives and pronouns, and confusion between the definite and indefinite declensions; the introduction of the proposition *to* before infinitives, and occasional use of weak preterites of verbs and participles instead of strong;—the constant occurrence of *en* for *on* in the plurals of verbs, and frequent elision of the final *e*;—together with the uncertainty in the rule for the government of prepositions." In the earlier text one of the most striking peculiarities is what has been termed the *nunnation*, defined by Sir Frederic as "consisting of the addition of a final *n* to certain cases of nouns and adjectives, to some tenses of verbs, and to several other parts of speech." The western dialect, of which both texts, and especially the earlier, exhibit strong marks, is further described as perceptible in the "termination of the present tense plural in *th*, and infinitives in *i*, *ie*, or *y*; the forms of the plural personal pronouns, *heo*, *heore*, *heom*; the frequent occurrence of the prefix *i* before past participles; the use of *v* for *f*; and prevalence of the vowel *u* for *i* or *y*, in such words as *dude*, *hudde*, *hulle*, *putte*, *hure*, &c." "But," it is added, "on comparing the two texts carefully together, some remarkable variations are apparent in the later, which seem to arise, not from its having been composed at a more recent period, but from the infusion of an Anglian or Northern element into the dialect." From these indications the learned editor is disposed to think that the later text "may have been composed or transcribed in one of the counties conterminous to the Anglian border, and he suggests that "perhaps we might fix on the eastern side of Leicestershire as the locality."

One thing in the English of Layamon that is eminently deserving of notice with reference to the history of the language is the very small amount of the French or Latin element that is found in it.

Layamon's poem extends to nearly 32,250 lines, or more than double the length of Wace's *Brut*. This may indicate the amount of the additions which the English chronicler has made to his French original. That, however, is only one, though the chief, of several preceding works to which he professes himself to have been indebted. His own account is —

He nom tha Englisca boc
Tha makede Seint Beda;
An other he nom on Latin,
Tha makede Seinte Albin,
And the feire Austin,
The fulluht broute hider in.
Boc he nom the thridde,
Leide ther amidden,
Tha makede a Frenchis clerc,
Wace was ihoten,
The wel conthe writen,
And he hoe yef thare aethelen
Aelienor, the wes Henries quene,

Thes heyes kinges.
Layamon leide theos boc,
And tha leaf wende.
He heom leofliche bi-heold
Lithe him beo Drihten.
Fetheren he nom mid fingren,
And fiede on boc-felle,
And tha sothe word
Sette to-gathere,
And tha thre boc
Thrumde to ane.

That is, literally :—

He took the English book
That Saint Bede made ;
Another he took in Latin,
That Saint Albin made,
And the fair Austin,
That baptism brought hither in.
The third book he took,
[And] laid there in midst,
That made a French clerk.
Wace was [he] called,
That well could write,
And he it gave to the noble
Eleanor, that was Henry's queen,
The high king's.
Layamon laid [before him] these books
And the leaves turned.
He them lovingly beheld ;
Merciful to him be [the] Lord.
Feather (pen) he took with fingers,
And wrote on book-skin,
And the true words
Set together,
And the three books
Compressed into one.

His English book was no doubt the translation into the vernacular tongue, commonly attributed to King Alfred, of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, which Layamon does not seem to have known to have been originally written in Latin. What he says about his Latin book is unintelligible. St. Austin died in A.D. 604 ; and the only Albin of whom anything is known was Albin abbot of St. Austin's at Canterbury, who is mentioned by Bede as one of the persons to whom he was indebted for assistance in the compilation of his history ; but he lived more than a century after St. Austin (or Augustine). Some Latin chronicle, however, Layamon evidently had ; and his scholarship, therefore, extended to an acquaintance with two other tongues in addition to the now obsolete classic form of his own.

The principal, and indeed almost the only, passage in Layamon's poem from which any inference can be drawn as to the precise time when it was written, is one near the end (p. 31, 979–80) in which, speaking of the tax called Rome-feoh, Rome-scot, or Peter-pence, he seems to express a doubt whether it will much longer continue to be paid—

> Drihte wat hu longe
> Theo lagen scullen ilaeste
> (The Lord knows how long
> The law shall last).

This his learned editor conceives to allude to a resistance which it appears was made to the collection of the tax by King John and the nobility in the year 1205; and that supposition, he further suggests, may be held to be fortified by the manner in which Queen Eleanor, who had retired to Aquitaine on the accession of John, and died abroad at an advanced age in 1204, is spoken of in the passage quoted above from what we may call the Preface, written, no doubt, after the work was finished—" Aelienor, the *wes* Henries quene."

"The structure of Layamon's poem," Sir Frederic observes, "consists partly of lines in which the alliterative system of the Anglo-Saxons is preserved, and partly of couplets of unequal length rhyming together. Many couplets, indeed, occur which have both of these forms, whilst others are often met with which possess neither. The latter, therefore, must have depended wholly on accentuation, or have been corrupted in transcription. The relative proportion of each of these forms is not to be ascertained without extreme difficulty, since the author uses them everywhere intermixed, and slides from alliteration to rhyme, or from rhyme to alliteration, in a manner perfectly arbitrary. The alliterative portion, however, predominates on the whole greatly over the lines rhyming together, even including the imperfect or assonant terminations, which are very frequent." Mr. Guest, Sir Frederic notes, has shown by the specimen which he has given with the accents marked in his *English Rhymes* (ii. 114–24), "that the rhyming couplets of Layamon are founded on the models of accentuated Anglo-Saxon rhythms of four, five, six, or seven accents."

Layamon's poetical merit, and also his value as an original authority, are rated rather high by his editor. His additions to and amplifications of Wace, we are told, consist in the earlier part of the work "principally of the speeches placed in the mouths of different personages, which are often given with quite a dramatic effect." "The text of Wace," it is added, "is enlarged throughout, and in many passages to such an extent, particularly after the birth of Arthur, that one line is dilated into twenty; names of persons and localities are constantly supplied, and not unfrequently interpolations occur of entirely new matter, to the extent of more than an hundred lines. Layamon often embellishes and improves on his copy; and the meagre narrative of the French poet is heightened by graphic touches and details, which give him a just claim to be considered, not as a mere translator, but as an original writer." The chief interest of the form of the poem is that it illustrates the transition of English prosody. Layamon still uses the unrhymed alliterative line of two short sections; but he frequently rhymes, and inclines to fall into a couplet.

THE 'ORMULUM'

Another metrical work of considerable extent, that known as the *Ormulum*, from Orm, or Ormin, which appears to have been the name of the writer, has been usually assigned to nearly the same age with the *Brut* of Layamon. It exists only in a single manuscript, which there is some reason for believing to be the author's autograph, now preserved in the Bodleian Library among the books bequeathed by the great scholar Francis Junius, who appears to have purchased it at the Hague in 1659 at the sale of the books of his deceased friend Janus Ulitius, or Vlitius (van Vliet), also an eminent philologist and book-collector. It is a folio volume, consisting of 90 parchment leaves, besides 29 others inserted, upon which the poetry is written in double columns, in a stiff but distinct hand, and without division into verses, so that the work had always been assumed to be prose till its metrical character was pointed out by Tyrwhitt in his edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 1775. It has now been printed in full, under the title of The Ormulum; Now first edited from the Original Manuscript in the Bodleian, with Notes and a Glossary, by Robert Meadows White, D.D., late Fellow of St. Mary Magdalene College, and formerly Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford; 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, at the University Press, 1852.

The *Ormulum* is described by Dr. White as being "a series of Homilies, in an imperfect state, composed in metre without alliteration, and, except in very few cases, also without rhyme;

the subject of the Homilies being supplied by those portions of the New Testament which were read in the daily service of the Church." The plan of the writer is, we are further told, "first to give a paraphrastic version of the Gospel of the day, adapting the matter to the rules of his verse, with such verbal additions as were required for that purpose. He then adds an exposition of the subject in its doctrinal and practical bearings, in the treatment of which he borrows copiously from the writings of St. Augustine and Ælfric, and occasionally from those of Beda." "Some idea," it is added, "may be formed of the extent of Ormin's labours when we consider that, out of the entire series of Homilies, provided for nearly the whole of the yearly service, nothing is left beyond the text of the thirty-second." We have still nearly ten thousand long lines of the work, or nearly twenty thousand as Dr. White prints them, with the fifteen syllables divided into two sections, the one of eight the other of seven syllables,—the latter, which terminates in an unaccented syllable, being prosodically equivalent to one of six, so that the whole is simply our still common alternation of the eight-syllabled and the six-syllabled line, only without either rhyme or even alliteration, which makes it as pure a species of blank verse, though a different species, as that which is now in use.

The list of the texts, or subjects of the Homilies, as preserved in the manuscript, extends to 242, and it appears to be imperfect. Ormin plainly claims to have completed his long self-imposed task.

Here is the beginning of the Dedication to his brother Walter, which stands at the head of the work :—

Nu, brotherr Wallterr, brotherr min
  [Now, brother Walter, brother mine]
Affterr the flaeshes kinde ;
  [After the flesh's kind (or nature)]
Annd brotherr min i Crisstenndom
  [And brother mine in Christendom (or Christ's kingdom)]
Thurrh fulluhht and thurrh trowwthe ;
  [Through baptism and through truth]
Annd brotherr min i Godess hus,
  [And brother mine in God's house]
Yet o the thride wise,
  [Yet on (in) the third wise]
Thurrh thatt witt hafenn takenn ba
  [Though that we two have taken both]
An reghellboc to folghenn,
  [One rule-book to follow]
Unnderr kanunnkess had and lif,
  [Under canonic's (canon's) rank and life]

Swa summ Sannt Awwstin sette ;
[So as St. Austin set (or ruled)]
Icc hafe don swa summ thu badd
[I have done so as thou bade]
Annd forthedd te thin wille ;
[And performed thee thine will (wish)]
Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh
[I have wended (turned) into English]
Goddspelless hallghe lare,
[Gospel's holy lore]
Affterr thatt little witt tatt me
[After that little wit that me]
Min Drihhtin hafethth lenedd.
[My Lord hath lent]

One remarkable feature in this English is evidently something very peculiar in the spelling. And the same system is observed throughout the work. It is found on a slight examination to consist in the duplication of the consonant whenever it follows a vowel having any other than the sound which is now for the most part indicated by the annexation of a silent *e* to the single consonant, or what may be called the *name* sound, being that by which the vowel is commonly named or spoken of in our modern English. Thus *pane* would by Ormin be written *pan*, but *pan pann* ; *mean men*, but *men menn* ; *pine pin*, but *pin pinn* ; *own on*, but *on onn* ; *tune tun*, but *tun tunn*. This, as Mr. Guest has pointed out, is, after all, only a rigorous carrying out of a principle which has always been applied to a certain extent in English orthography,—as in *tally*, or *tall*, *berry*, *witty*, *folly*, *dull*, as compared with *tale*, *beer*, *white*, *lone*, *mule*. The effect, however, in Ormin's work is on a hasty inspection to make his English seem much more rude and antique than it really is.

Ormin's English certainly seems to differ much less from that of the present day than Layamon's. His vocabulary may have as little in it of any foreign admixture ; but it appears to contain many fewer words that have now become obsolete ; and both his grammar and his construction have much more of a modern character and air.

On the whole, it may be assumed that, while we have a dialect founded on that of the Saxons specially so called in Layamon, we have a specially Anglian form of the national language in the *Ormulum* ; and perhaps that distinction will be enough, without supposing any considerable difference of date, to explain the linguistic differences between the two. There is good reason for believing that the Anglian part of the country shook off the shackles of the old inflectional system sooner than the Saxon, and that our modern comparatively uninflected and analytic English was at least in its earliest stage more the product of Anglian than of purely Saxon influences, and is to be held as having grown up rather in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country than in the southern or south-western.

The book has no poetic beauty. Its curious spelling and its evident feeling after some new kind of metrical music are its chief characteristics.

THE 'ANCREN RIWLE'

There is also to be mentioned, along with the *Brut* of Layamon and the *Ormulum*, a work of considerable extent in prose which has been assigned to the same interesting period in the history of the language, the *Ancren Riwle*, that is, the Anchorites', or rather Anchoresses', Rule, a treatise on the duties of the monastic life, written evidently by an ecclesiastic, and probably one in a position of eminence and authority, for the direction of three ladies to whom it is addressed, and who, with their domestic servants or lay sisters, appear to have formed the entire community of a religious house situated at Tarente (otherwise called Tarrant-Kaines, Kaineston, or Kingston) in Dorsetshire. This work too has been printed, having been edited for the Camden Society in 1853 by the Rev. James Morton, B.D. It is preserved in four manuscripts, three of them in the Cottonian Collection, the other belonging to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and there is also in the Library of Magdalen College, Oxford, a Latin text of the greater part of it. The entire work extends to eight Parts, or Books, which in the printed edition cover 215 quarto pages. Mr. Morton, who has appended to an apparently careful representation of the ancient text both a glossary and a version in the language of the present day, has clearly shown, in opposition to the commonly received opinion, that the work was originally written in English, and that the Latin in so far as it goes is only a translation.

Two other mistakes in the old accounts are also disposed of:—that the three recluses to whom the work is addressed belonged to the monastic order of St. James, and that they were the sisters of the writer. He merely directs them, if any ignorant person should ask them of what order they were, to say that they were of the order of St. James, who in his canonical epistle has declared that pure religion consists in visiting and relieving the widow and the orphan, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world; and in addressing them as his dear sisters, "he only," as Mr. Morton explains, "uses the form of speech commonly adopted in convents, where nuns are usually spoken of as sisters or mothers, and monks as brothers or fathers."

Upon what is the most important question relating to the work, regarded as a documentary monument belonging to the history of the language, the learned editor has scarcely succeeded in throwing so much light. Of the age of the manuscripts, or the character of the handwriting, not a word is said. It does not even appear whether any one of the copies can be supposed to be of the antiquity assumed for the work upon either the new or the old theory of its authorship. The question is left to rest entirely upon the language, which, it is remarked, is evidently that of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, not greatly differing from that of Layamon, which has been clearly shown by Sir F. Madden to have been written not later than 1205.

In one particular, however, the English of the *Rule* differs remarkably from Layamon's. In that, as we have seen, Sir F. Madden found in above 32,000 verses of the older text only about 50 words of French derivation, and only about 90 in all in the 57,000 of both texts; whereas in the present work the infusion of Norman words is described as large. But this, as Mr. Morton suggests, is "owing probably to the peculiar subjects treated of in it, which are theological and moral, in speaking of which terms derived from the Latin would readily occur to the mind of a learned ecclesiastic much conversant with that language, and with the works on similar subjects written in it."

A few sentences from the Eighth or last Part, which treats of domestic matters, will afford a sufficient specimen of this curious work:—

Ye ne schulen eten vleschs ne seim buten ine muchele secnesse; other hwoso is euer feble eteth potage blitheliche; and wunieth ou to lutel drunch. Notheleas, leoue sustren, ower mete and ower drunch haueth ithuht me lesse then ich wolde. Ne ueste ye nenne dei to bread and to watere, bute ye habben leaue. Sum ancre maketh hire bord mid hire gistes withuten. Thet is to muche ureondschipe, uor, of alle ordres theonne is hit unkuindelukest and mest ayean ancre ordre, thet is al dead to the worlde. Me haueth i-herd ofte siggen thet deade men speken mid cwike men; auh thet heo eten mid cwike men ne uond ich neuer yete. Ne makie ye none gistninges; ne ne tulle ye to the yete non unkuthe harloz; thauh ther nere non other vuel of [hit ?] bute hore methlease muth, hit wolde other hwule letten heouendliche thouhtes.

[That is, literally:—Ye not shall eat flesh nor lard but in much sickness; or whoso is ever feeble may eat potage blithely; and accustom yourselves to little drink. Nevertheless, dear sisters, your meat and your drink have seemed to me less than I would (have it). Fast ye not no day to bread and to water but ye have leave. Some anchoresses make their board (or meals) with their friends without. That is too much friendship, for, of all orders, then is it most unnatural and most against anchoress order, that is all dead to the world One has heard oft say that dead men speak with quick (living) men; but that they eat with quick men not found I never yet. Make not ye no banquetings, nor allure ye not to the gate no strange vagabonds; though there were not none other evil of it but their measureless mouth (or talk), it would (or might) other while (sometimes) hinder heavenly thoughts.] The work has a kind of lovable mysticism and the style frequently quickens with the spiritual fervour of the writer.

Other interesting early Middle English works are the *Poema Morala*, a lament on the vanity of life, remarkable for the ease with which it uses the really modern form of end-rhyme, a verse-translation of *Genesis and Exodus*, and a *Bestiary* full of transitional uncertainty as to metre, as is also the *Orison of Our Lady* (1210). The *Proverbs of Alfred* and the *Proverbs of Hendyng* are also of importance in the history of poetic form. But the *Owl and the Nightingale* by Nicholas de Guildford, an example of the mediæval French *débat*, is a very lively dispute between the bird of wisdom and the bird of love, which achieves some certitude in the use of the octosyllabic couplet. It belongs to the middle of the thirteenth century.

EARLY ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCES

From the thirteenth century also we have probably to date the origin or earliest composition of English metrical romances; at least, none has descended to the present day which seems to have a claim to any higher antiquity. There is no absolutely conclusive evidence that all our old metrical romances are translations from the French; the French original cannot in every case be produced; but it is at least extremely doubtful if any such work was ever composed in English except upon the foundation of a similar French work. It is no objection that the subjects of most of these poems are not French or continental, but British—that the stories of some of them are purely English or Saxon: this, as has been shown, was the case with the early northern French poetry generally, from whatever cause, whether simply in consequence of the connection of Normandy with this country from the time of the Conquest, or partly from the earlier intercourse of the Normans with their neighbours the people of Armorica, or Bretagne, whose legends and traditions, which were common to them with their kindred the Welsh, have unquestionably served as the fountain-head to the most copious of all the streams of romantic fiction. French seems to have been the only language of popular literature (apart from mere songs and ballads) in England for some ages after the Conquest; if even a native legend, therefore, was to be turned into a romance, it was in French that the poem would at that period be written. It is possible, indeed, that some legends might have escaped the French trouveurs, to be discovered and taken up at a later date by the English minstrels; but this is not likely to have happened with any that were at all popular or generally known; and of this description, it is believed, are all those, without any exception, upon which our existing early English metrical romances are founded. The subjects of these compositions—Tristram, King Horn, Havelok, &c.—could hardly have been missed by the French poets in the long period during which they had the whole field to themselves: we have the most conclusive evidence with regard to some of the legends in question that they were well known at an early date to the writers in that language;—the story of Havelok, for instance, is in Gaimar's *Chronicle*;—upon this general consideration alone, therefore, which is at least not contradicted by either the internal or historical evidence in any particular case, it seems reasonable to infer that, where we have both an English and a French metrical romance upon the same subject, the French is the earlier of the two, and the original of the other. Still many consider that the existence of a French romance with an English subject proves an English original.

The history of the English metrical romance appears shortly to be, that at least the first examples of it were translations from the French;—that there is no evidence of any such having been produced before the close of the twelfth century;—that in the thirteenth century were composed the earliest of those we now possess in their original form;—that in the fourteenth the English took the place of the French metrical romance with all classes, and that this was the era alike of its highest ascendancy and of its most abundant and felicitous production;—that in the fifteenth it was supplanted by another species of poetry among the more educated classes, and had also to contend with another rival in the prose romance, but that, nevertheless, it still continued to be produced, although in less quantity and of an inferior fabric,—mostly, indeed, if not exclusively, by the mere modernization of older compositions—for the use of the common people;—and that it did not altogether cease to be read and written till after the commencement of the sixteenth. From that time the taste for this earliest form of our poetical literature (at least counting from the Norman Conquest) lay asleep in the national heart till it was re-awakened in our own day by Scott, after the lapse of three hundred years.

Among these romances written in rhyming metre we find *Sir Tristram*, a crude but interesting version of the famous story that so many poets have treated, late and early; *Havelok the Dane*, a vigorous saga with real "local colour"; *King Horn*, a pictorial and romantic story of a lost king's son, containing a version of the cup-and-king incident, with a rather remarkable heroine, Rymenhild. The later group includes those of *King Alisaunder*, *Arthour and Merlin*, which gives us in 10,000 lines the earlier part of the Arthurian story, and *Richard Cœur de Lion*, notable for its strong English feeling. The *Seven Sages* is an early example of the device of binding several short stories within a thread of narrative. Two of the most popular romances of the time were *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton*. *Ywain and Gawaine* and the famous *Squyer of Low Degree* have a much truer romantic quality. *Amis and Amiloun* is an adaptation of the exquisite French chanson de geste, and *Sir Isumbras* tells with charm a singularly lovely story.

In another set of romances, written in the old alliterative metres, we find *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, from a French original unknown, much the most notable of the group of Gawain stories, a perfectly told and delectable tale. *William and the Werewolf* is a good version of the great continental romance.

METRICAL 'CHRONICLE OF ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER'

Nearly what Biography is to History are the metrical romances to the versified *Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, a narrative of British and English affairs from the time of Brutus to the end of the reign of Henry III., which, from events to which it alludes, must have been written after 1297.[1] All that is known of the author is that he was a monk of the abbey of Gloucester. His *Chronicle* was printed—"faithfully, I dare say," says Tyrwhitt, "but from incorrect manuscripts"—by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford, in 1724; and a re-impression of this edition was produced at London in 1810. The work in the early part of it may be considered a free translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin History; and it is frequently amusing and lively.

Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, as printed, is in long lines of fourteen syllables, which, however, are generally divisible into two of eight and six, and were perhaps intended to be so written and read. The language appears to be marked by the peculiarities of West Country English. Ample specimens are given by Warton and Ellis; we shall not encumber our limited space with extracts. We will only transcribe, as a sample of the language at the commencement of the reign of Edward I., and for the sake of the curious evidence it supplies in confirmation of a fact to which we have more than once had occasion to draw attention, the short passage about the prevalence of the French tongue in England down even to this date, more than two centuries after the Conquest:—

> "Thus come lo! Engelonde into Normannes honde,
> And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe speche,
> And speke French as dude atom, and here chyldren dude al so teche,
> So that heymen of thys lond, that of her blod come,
> Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.
> Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolth of hym well lute:
> Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her kunde speche yute.
> Ich wene ther be ne man in world contreyes none
> That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, but Engelond one.
> Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
> Vor the more that a man con the more worth he ys."

[That is, literally:—Lo! thus England came into the hand of the Normans: and the Normans could not speak then but their own speech, and spoke French as they did at home, and their children did all so teach; so that high men of this land, that of their blood come, retain all the same speech that they of them took. For, unless a man know French, one talketh of him little. But low men hold to English, and to their natural speech yet. I imagine there be no people in any country of the world that do not hold to their natural speech, but in England alone. But well I wot it is well for to know both; for the more that a man knows, the more worth he is.]

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[1] This has been shown by Sir F. Madden in his Introduction to *Havelok the Dane*, p. lii.

A short composition of Robert of Gloucester's on the Martyrdom of Thomas à Beket was printed by the Percy Society in 1845.

ROBERT MANNYNG, OR DE BRUNNE

Along with this *Chronicle* may be mentioned the similar performance of Robert Mannyng, otherwise called Robert de Brunne (from his birthplace,[1] Brunne, or Bourne, near Deping, or Market Deeping in Lincolnshire), belonging as it does to a date not quite half a century later. The work of Robert de Brunne is in two parts, both translated from the French: the first, coming down to the death of Cadwalader, from Wace's *Brut*; the second, extending to the death of Edward I., from the French or Romance chronicle written by Piers, or Peter, of Langtoft, a canon regular of St. Austin, at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who wrote various works in French, and who appears to have lived at the same time with De Brunne. Langtoft, whose chronicle, though it has not been printed, is preserved in more than one manuscript, begins with Brutus; but De Brunne, for sufficient reasons it is probable, preferred Wace for the earlier portion of the story, and only took to his own countryman and contemporary when deserted by his older Norman guide. It is the latter part of his work, however, which, owing to the subject, has been thought most valuable or interesting in modern times; it has been printed by Hearne, under the title of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle (as illustrated and improved by Robert of Brunne), from the death of Cadwalader to the end of K. Edward the First's reign; transcribed, and now first published, from a MS. in the Inner Temple Library, 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1725; [reprinted London, 1810.] This part, like the original French of Langtoft, is in Alexandrine verse of twelve syllables; the earlier part, which remains in manuscript, is in the same octosyllabic verse in which its original, Wace's chronicle, is written. The work is stated in a

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[1] See a valuable note on De Brunne in Sir Frederic Madden's *Havelok the Dane* Introduction, p. xiii.

Latin note at the end of the MS. to have been finished in 1338. Some scholars also ascribe to him *Handlyng Synne*, a study translated from the French of some English predecessor.

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE AND PROSE

About the thirteenth century the English lyric comes into being, with the lovely *Sumer is i-cumen in*, and the tuneful songs, *Alisoun*, and *Lenten is come with Love to town.*

Prose yields us the *Ayenbyte of Inwyt*, a translation from the French in the curious Kentish dialect by a Canterbury monk, Michael of Northgate. Devotional verse is illustrated by another prose translator, William of Shoreham. In the *Cursor Mundi*, a poem which covers all history in a fluent scriptural and legendary mode, we have an innocent epic of great interest.[1]

Richard Rolle of Hampole, a monk of the real mystic temper, was the author of the *Prick of Conscience*, and other works in Latin and English. He has an intensity of temper that sometimes gave true devotional ecstasy to his expression.

The group of alliterative poems known as *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and *The Pearl* has been assigned to a single author (in whom some recognize too the author of *Sir Gawain and*

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[1] Its importance as bearing upon the Miracle-Plays has been fully pointed out by Mr. A. W. Pollard and other writers. One passage from the description of Noah may be compared with that in the York *Deluge* play. The spelling is modernized :—

Cursor Mundi [*God speaks to Noah*]—

A ship must thou needs dight,
Myself shall be the master-wright.
I shall thee tell how broad and long,
Of what measure and how strong.
When the timber is fastened well,
Wind the sides ever each and deal.
Bind it first with balk and band,
And wind it then too with good wand.
With pitch, look, it be not thin !
Plaster it well without and in !

The York *Deluge* [*God speaks to Noah*]—

Make it of boards, and wands between,
Thus thriftily and not over thin,
Look that thy seams be subtly seen
And nailéd well, that they not twin :
Thus I devised it should have been ;
Therefore do forth, and leave thy din.

[R.]

the Green Knight). The three poems are remarkable for their profound reality of feeling, and their spiritual grace, often rising to an unusual beauty of impassioned devotion. *Cleanness* is a noble eulogy of purity, *Patience* tells the story of Jonah, *The Pearl* is a dream-vision and an elegy which laments wistfully and sweetly the loss of a daughter.

LAWRENCE MINOT

Putting aside the authors of some of the best of the early metrical romances, whose names are generally or universally unknown, perhaps the earliest writer of English verse subsequent to the Conquest, who deserves the name of a poet is Lawrence Minot, who lived and wrote about the middle of the fourteenth century, and of the reign of Edward III. His ten poems in celebration of the battles and victories of that king, preserved in the Cotton MS. Galba E. ix., which the old catalogue had described as a manuscript of Chaucer, the compiler having been misled by the name of some former proprietor, Richard Chawfer, inscribed on the volume, were discovered by Tyrwhitt while collecting materials for his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, in a note to the *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*, prefixed to which work their existence was first mentioned. This was in 1775. In 1781 some specimens of them were given (out of their chronological place) by Warton in the third volume of his *History of Poetry*. Finally, in 1796, the whole were published by Ritson under the title of Poems written anno MCCCLII., by Lawrence Minot; with Introductory Dissertations on the Scottish Wars of Edward III., on his claim to the throne of France, and Notes and Glossary, 8vo. London; and a reprint of this volume appeared in 1825. Mr. Joseph Hall has now edited the works for the Clarendon Press. The poems are ten in number, their subjects being the Battle of Halidon Hill (fought 1333); the Battle of Bannockburn (1314), or rather the manner in which that defeat, sustained by his father, had been avenged by Edward III.; Edward's first Invasion of France (1339); the Sea-fight in the Swine, or Zwin[1] (1340); the Siege of Tournay (the same year); the Landing of the English King at La Hogue, on his Expedition in 1346; the Siege of Calais (the same year); the Battle of Neville's Cross (the same year); the Sea-fight with the Spaniards off Winchelsea (1350); and the Taking of the Guisnes (1352). It is from this last date that Ritson, somewhat unwarrantably, assumes that all the poems were written in that year. As they are very various in their form and manner, it is more probable that they were produced as the occasions of them arose, and therefore that they ought rather to be assigned to the interval between 1333 and 1352. They are remarkable, if not for any poetical qualities of a high order, yet for a precision and selectness, as well as a force, of expression. There is a true martial tone and spirit too in them, which reminds us of the best of our old heroic ballads. Minot uses a variety of metres, and has some power over both diction and cadence.

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[1] To the south of the Isle of Cadsand, at the mouth of the West Scheldt.

'PIERS PLOUGHMAN'

It may be observed that Minot's verses are thickly sprinkled with what is called *alliteration*, or the repetition of words having the same commencing letter, either immediately after one another, or with the intervention only of one or two other words generally unemphatic or of subordinate importance. Alliteration, which we find here combined with rhyme, was in an earlier stage of our poetry employed, more systematically, as the substitute for that decoration—the recurrence, at certain regular intervals, of like beginnings, serving the same purpose which is now accomplished by what Milton has contemptuously called "the jingling sound of like endings." To the English of the period before the Conquest, until its very latest stage, rhyme was unknown, and down to the tenth century our verse appears to have known no other ornament except that of alliteration. Hence, naturally, even after we had borrowed the practice of rhyme from the French or Romance writers, our poetry retained for a time more or less of its original habit. In Layamon, as we have seen, alliterative and rhyming couplets are intermixed; in other cases, as in Minot, we have the rhyme only pretty liberally bespangled with alliteration. At this date, in fact, the difficulty probably would have been to avoid alliteration in writing verse; all the old customary phraseologies of poetry had been moulded upon that principle; and indeed alliterative expression has in every age, and in many other languages as well as our own, had a charm for the popular ear, so that it has always largely prevailed in proverbs and other such traditional forms of words, nor is it yet by any means altogether discarded as an occasional embellishment of composition, whether in verse or in prose. But there is one poetical work of the fourteenth century, of considerable extent, and in some respects of remarkable merit, in which the verse is without rhyme, and the system of alliteration is almost as regular as in the poetry of the times before the Conquest. This is the famous *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, or, as the subject is expressed at full length in the Latin title, Visio Willielmi de Petro Ploughman, that is, The Vision of William concerning Piers or Peter Ploughman.

Of the author of *Piers Ploughman* scarcely anything is known. He has commonly been called Robert Langland : but there are grounds for believing that his Christian name was William, and it is probable that it is himself of whom he speaks under that name throughout his work. He is supposed to have been a monk, and he seems to have resided in the West of England, near the Malvern Hills, where he introduces himself at the commencement of his poem as falling asleep "on a May morwenynge," and entering upon his dreams or visions.

The general subject may be said to be the same with that of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the exposition of the impediments and temptations which beset the crusade of this our mortal life; and the method, too, like Bunyan's, is the allegorical; but the spirit of the poetry is not so much picturesque, or even descriptive, as satirical. Vices and abuses of all sorts come in for their share of the exposure and invective; but the main attack throughout is directed against the corruptions of the church, and the hypocrisy and worldliness, the ignorance, indolence, and sensuality, of the ecclesiastical order. To this favourite theme the author constantly returns with new affection and sharper zest from any less high matter which he may occasionally take up. Hence it has been commonly assumed that he must have himself belonged to the ecclesiastical profession, that he was probably a priest or monk. And his Vision has been regarded not only as mainly a religious poem, but as almost a puritanical and Protestant work, although produced nearly two centuries before either Protestantism or Puritanism was ever heard of. In this notion, as we have seen, it was brought into such repute at the time of the Reformation that three editions of it were printed in one year. There is nothing, however, of anti-Romanism, properly so called, in Langland, either doctrinal or constitutional; and even the anti-clerical spirit of his poetry is not more decided than what is found in the writings of Chaucer, and the other popular literature of the time. In all ages, indeed, it is the tendency of popular literature to erect itself into a power adverse to that of the priesthood, as has been evinced more especially by the poetical literature of modern Europe from the days of the Provençal troubadours. In the *Canterbury Tales*, however, and in most other works where this spirit appears, the puritanism (if so it is to be called) is merely one of the forms of the poetry; in *Piers Ploughman* the poetry is principally a form or expression of the puritanism.

Though Skeat and Jusserand maintain the authorship of William Langland, whom they suppose to have been born about 1331, Professor Manly in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* declares that the work consists of a group of poems written by three different men, and supports his theory by the internal evidence of differences in metre, diction, and mental attitude, which are very striking.

There are three principal versions of the poem as elucidated by Skeat. The A text presents three visions that come to the author on the Malvern Hills. The prologue and passus 1–4 express the vision of the field full of folk, Holy Church, and Lady Meed; passus 5–8 give the vision of *Piers the Ploughman*; passus 9–12 narrate the search of the dreamer for Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best.

The rhythm or measure of the verse in this poem must be considered as accentual rather than syllabical—that is to say, it depends rather upon the number of the accents than of the syllables. This is, perhaps, the original principle of all verse; and it still remains the leading principle in various kinds of verse, both in our own and in other languages. At first, probably, only the accented syllables were counted, or reckoned of any rhythmical value; other syllables upon which there was no emphasis went for nothing, and might be introduced in any part of the verse, one, two, or three at a time, as the poet chose. Of course it would at all times be felt that there were limits beyond which this licence could not be carried without destroying or injuring the metrical character of the composition; but these limits would not at first be fixed as they now for the most part are. The elementary form of the verse in *Piers Ploughman* demands a succession of four accented syllables—two in the first hemistich or short line, and two in the second; but, while each of those in the first line is usually preceded by either one or two unaccented syllables, commonly only one of those in the second line is so preceded. The second line, therefore, is for the most part shorter than the first. And they also differ in regard to the alliteration: it being required that in the first both the accented or emphatic syllables, which are generally initial syllables, should begin with the same letter, but that in the second only the first accented syllable should begin with that letter. This is the general rule; but, either from the text being corrupt or from the irregularity of the composition, the exceptions are very numerous.

The poem begins as follows:—

In a summer season,
  When soft was the sun,
I shoop me into shrowds[1]
  As I a sheep[2] were;
In habit as an hermit
  Unholy of werkes,[3]
Went wild in this world
  Wonders to hear;
Ac[4] on a May morwening
  On Malvern hills
Me befel a ferly,[5]
  Of fairy me thought.
I was weary for-wandered,[6]
  And went me to rest
Under a brood[7] bank,
  By a burn's[8] side;
And as I lay and leaned,
  And looked on the waters,
I slombered into a sleeping,
  It swayed so mury.[9]
Then gan I meten[10]
  A marvellous sweven,[11]
That I was in a wilderness,
  Wist I never where:
And, as I beheld into the east
  On high to the sun,
I seigh[12] a tower on a toft[13]
  Frieliche ymaked,[14]
A deep dale beneath,
  A donjon therein,
With deep ditches and darke,
  And dreadful of sight.
A fair field full of folk
  Found I there between,
Of all manner of men,
  The mean and the rich,
Werking[15] and wandering
  As the world asketh.

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[1] I put myself into clothes. [2] A shepherd.

[3] Whitaker's interpretation is, "in habit, not like an anchorite who keeps his cell, but like one of those unholy hermits who wander about the world to see and hear wonders." He reads, "That went forth in the worl," &c.

[4] And. [5] Wonder. [6] Worn out with wandering.

[7] Broad. [8] Stream's. [9] It sounded so pleasant.

[10] Meet. [11] Dream. [12] Saw.

[13] An elevated ground. [14] Handsomely built. [15] Working.

The poem often displays both a well-filled canvas and a picture with impassioned life and stir in it. The satiric touches are also natural and effective; the expression is clear, easy, and vigorous, while the burning humanitarianism, the indignation and pity displayed in it often raise it to the realm of noble poetry.

'PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN'S CREED'

The popularity of *Piers Ploughman* appears to have brought alliterative verse into fashion again even for poems of considerable length. But the most remarkable imitation of the *Vision* is the poem entitled *Piers the Ploughman's Creed*, which appears to have been written about the end of the fourteenth century: it was first printed separately at London, in 4to. by Reynold Wolfe, in 1553; then by Rogers, along with the *Vision*, in 1561. In modern times it has been printed frequently. The *Creed* is the composition of a follower of Wyclif, and an avowed opponent of Romanism. Here, Mr. Wright observes, "Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage; he is the simple representative of the peasant rising up to judge and act for himself—the English *sans-culotte* of the fourteenth century, if we may be allowed the comparison." The satire, or invective, in this effusion (which consists only of 1697 short lines), is directed altogether against the clergy, and especially the monks or friars; and Piers or Peter is represented as a poor ploughman from whom the writer receives that instruction in Christian truth which he had sought for in vain from every order of these licensed teachers. The language is quite as antique as that of the *Vision*, as may appear from the following passage, in which Piers is introduced:—

Then turned I me forth,
  And talked to myself
Of the falsehede of this folk,
  How faithless they weren
And as I went by the way
  Weeping for sorrow,
I see a seely[1] man me by
  Opon the plough hongen.[2]
His coat was of a clout[3]
  That cary[4] was y-called;

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[1] Simple.

[2] Hung, bent, over.

[3] Cloth.

[4] This is probably the same word that we have elsewhere in *caury maury*. It would seem to be the name of a kind of cloth.

His hood was full of holes,
  And his hair out;
With his knopped shoon[1]
  Clouted full thick,
His ton[2] toteden[3] out
  As he the lond treaded:
His hosen overhongen his hoc-shynes[4]
  On everich a side,
All beslomered[5] in fen[6]
  As he the plough followed.
Twey[7] mittens as meter[8]
  Made all of clouts,
The fingers weren for-weard[9]
  And full of fen honged.
This whit[10] wasled[11] in the feen[12]
  Almost to the ancle:
Four rotheren[13] him beforn,
  That feeble were worthy;[14]
Men might reckon each a rib[15]
  So rentful[16] they weren.
His wife walked him with,
  With a long goad,
In a cutted coat
  Cutted full high,
Wrapped in a winnow[17] sheet
  To wearen her fro weders,[18]
Barefoot on the bare ice,
  That the blood followed.
And at the lond's end[19] lath[20]
  A little crom-bolle,[21]
And thereon lay a little child
  Lapped in clouts,
And tweyn of twey years old[22]
  Opon another side.
And all they songen[23] o[24] song,
  That sorrow was to hearen;
They crieden all o cry,
  A careful note.
The seely man sighed sore,
  And said, "Children, beth[25] still."

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[1] Knobbed shoes. [2] Toes. [3] Peeped.

[4] Neither of Mr. Wright's explanations seems quite satisfactory: "crooked shins;" or "the shin towards the *hock* or ankle?"

[5] Bedaubed. [6] Mud. [7] Two.

[8] Mr. Wright suggests *fitter*; which does not seem to make sense.

[9] Were worn out. [10] Wight. [11] Dirtied himself.

[12] Fen, mud. [13] Oxen (the Four Evangelists).

[14] Become? Perhaps the true reading is *forthy*, that is, *for that*.

[15] Each rib. [16] Meagre? [17] Winnowing.

[18] The meaning seems to be, "to protect her from the weather."

[19] The end of the field. [20] Lieth?

[21] Mr. Wright explains by "crum-bowl."

[22] Two of two years old. [23] Sang. [24] One. [25] Be.

This man looked opon me,
 And leet the plough stonden ;[1]
And said, "Seely man,
 Why sighest thou so hard?
Gif thee lack lifelode,[2]
 Lene thee ich will[3]
Swich[4] good as God hath sent :
 Go we, leve brother."[5]

LATER ENGLISH

(MIXED OR COMPOUND ENGLISH)

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE *Vision of Piers Ploughman* is our earliest poetical work of any considerable extent that may still be read with pleasure. It interests us chiefly as a lively picture of much in the manners and general social condition of the time, and of the new spirit of opposition to old things which was then astir; partly, too, by the language and style, and as a monument of a peculiar species of versification. Langland, or whoever were the authors, probably contributed by this great work to the advancement of their native tongue to a larger extent than has usually been credited. The grammatical forms will be found to be very nearly, if not exactly, the same as those of Chaucer's; the vocabulary does not abjure the principle of the same composite constitution; nor is the style much inferior in mere regularity and clearness. The widespread popularity of the poem would help to diffuse and establish whatever improvements in the language it may have introduced or exemplified. In addition to the ability displayed in it, and the popular spirit of the day with which it was animated, its position in the national literature naturally and deservedly gave to the *Vision of Piers Ploughman* an extraordinary influence; for it has the distinction (so far as is either known or probable) of being the earliest original work, of any magnitude, in the present form of the language.

If the *Vision*, however, is our earliest great original poem, Chaucer is still our first great poet, and the true father of our literature, properly so called. What is still more remarkable is, that very little of what has followed in the space of nearly five centuries that has elapsed since he lived and wrote is worthy of being compared with what he has left us. He is in our English poetry almost what Homer is in that of Greece, and Dante in that of Italy—at least in his own sphere still the greatest light.

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[1] Let the plough stand.

[2] If livelihood lack, or be wanting to, thee.

[3] Give or lend thee I will.

[4] Such.

[5] Let us go, dear brother.

Although, therefore, according to the scheme of the history of the language which has been propounded, the third form of it, or that which still subsists, may be regarded as having taken its commencement perhaps a full century before the date at which we are now arrived, our living English Literature may be fitly held to begin with the poetry of Chaucer. It will thus count an existence already of well over five centuries.

Geoffrey Chaucer was born about 1340 and lived to 1400. He was the son of a London vintner, John Chaucer, who also held a post in the Royal Household. Evidently the poet became attached to the retinue of Prince Lionel. He served in the French wars in 1359, and was ransomed from captivity in the following year. Thereafter he seems to have seen much civil service, being employed in diplomatic missions that took him once or twice to Italy. The later part of his life seems uneventful. We know he married, that he was given a life-lease of the gatehouse at Aldgate in 1374, and later a comptrollership of customs in the port of London, and that he died at Westminster.

His first period was strongly marked by the influence of the courtly French love-poets of his day, and the famous *Roman de la Rose*, part of which he translated. Various minor poems, and the *Boke of the Duchesse* (1369), belong to this time. The latter, an elegy on the death of the Duchess of Lancaster, though in conventional dream-form, is fresh and marked with true Chaucerian feeling. His visits to Italy and contact with the work of Boccaccio enriched and strengthened his style with new elements, evident in the *Compleynt of Mars*, and the vivacious *Parliament of Foules*. *Troilus and Creseide* is a musical and exquisite poem in which Chaucer first shows his keen and delicate power of character-drawing. The *House of Fame* affirms the growing originality of his style; and the *Legend of Good Women* combines a dreamy sweetness of story-telling with a revelation of the possibilities of that perfected measure now known as the heroic couplet. But Chaucer's masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales*, brings him into a final period where his own original genius has mastered and amalgamated all preceding influences. This great work, which sums up all the literary narrative forms of the Middle Ages, and invests them with a quick and sure humanity, contains twenty-five completed tales, but these make but a fourth of the author's intention. Yet they are more than sufficient to reveal the extraordinary variety and fertility of his genius, while the superb Prologue displays him as the earliest psychologist in English verse.

At the time when this great writer made his first essays the use of rhyme was established in English poetry, not exclusively (as we have seen by the example of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*), but very generally.

That the particular species of verse in which Chaucer has written his *Canterbury Tales* and some of his other poems had not been used by any other English poet before him, has not, we believe, been disputed, and does not appear to be disputable, at least from such remains of our early poetical literature as we now possess. Here, then, is one important fact. It is certain, also, that the French, if not likewise the Italian, poets who employed the decasyllabic (or more properly hendecasyllabic) metre were well known to Chaucer. The presumption, therefore, that his new metre is this same Italian or French metre of ten or eleven syllables (our present heroic verse) becomes very strong.

Moreover, if Chaucer's verse be not constructed upon the principle of syllabical as well as accentual regularity, when was this principle, which is now the law and universal practice of our poetry, introduced? It will not be denied to have been completely established ever since the language acquired in all material respects its present form and pronunciation—that is to say, at least since the middle of the sixteenth century: if it was not by Chaucer at the end of the fourteenth, by whom among his followers in the course of the next hundred and fifty years was it first exemplified?

At present it is sufficient to say that no one of his successors throughout this space has hinted that any improvement, any change, had been made in the construction of English verse since Chaucer wrote. On the contrary, he is generally recognized by them as the great reformer of our language and our poetry, and as their master, and instructor in their common art. By his friend and disciple Occleve he is called "the first finder of our fair language." So Lydgate, in the next generation, celebrates him as his master—as "chief poet of Britain—as

—"he that was of making soverain,
Whom all this lande of right ought prefer,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-ster"—

and as—

"The noble rhethor poet of Britain,
That worthy was the laurer to have
Of poetrye, and the palm attain;
That made first to distil and rain
The gold dew-drops of speech and eloquence
Into our tongue through his excellence,
And found the flowres first of rhetoric
Our rude speech only to enlumine," &c.

A later writer, Gawin Douglas, sounds his praise as—

"Venerable Chaucer, principal poet but[1] peer,
Heavenly trumpet, orlege,[2] and regulere;[3]
In eloquence balm, condict,[4] and dial,
Milky fountain, clear strand, and rose rial,"[5]

in a strain, it must be confessed, more remarkable for enthusiastic vehemence than for poetical inspiration. The learned, and at the same time elegant, Leland, in the next age describes him as the writer to whom his country's tongue owes all its beauties:—

"Anglia Chaucerum veneratur nostra poetam,
Cui veneres debet patria lingua suas;"

and again, in another tribute, as having first reduced the language into regular form:—

"Linguam qui patriam redegit illam
In formam."

And such seems to have been the unbroken tradition down to Spenser, who, looking back through two centuries, hails his great predecessor as still the "well of English undefiled."

"The poetry of Chaucer is really, in all essential respects, about the greenest and freshest in our language. We have some higher poetry than Chaucer's—poetry that has more of the character of a revelation, or a voice from another world: we have none in which there is a more abounding spirit of life, a truer or fuller natural inspiration. He may be said to verify, in another sense, the remark of Bacon, that what we commonly call antiquity was really the youth of the world: his poetry seems to breathe of a time when humanity was younger and more joyous-hearted than it now is. Undoubtedly he had an advantage as to this matter, in having been the first great poet of his country. Occupying this position, he stands in some degree between each of his successors and nature. The sire of a nation's minstrelsy is of necessity, though it may be unconsciously, regarded by all who come after him as almost a portion of nature—as one whose utterances are not so much the echo of hers as in very deed her own living voice—carrying in them a spirit as original and divine as the music of her running brooks, or of her breezes among the leaves. And there is not wanting something of reason in this idolatry. It is he alone who has conversed with nature directly, and without an interpreter—who has looked upon the glory of her countenance unveiled, and received upon his heart the perfect image of what she is. Succeeding poets, by reason of his intervention, and that imitation of him into which, in a greater or less degree, they are of necessity drawn, see her only, as it were, wrapt in hazy and metamorphosing adornments, which human hands have woven for her, and are prevented from perfectly discerning the outline and the movements of her form by that encumbering investiture. They are the fallen race, who have been banished from the immediate presence of the divinity, and have been left only to conjecture from afar off the brightness of that majesty which sits throned to them behind impenetrable clouds: he is the First Man, who has seen God walking in the garden, and communed with Him face to face.

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[1] Without
[2] Horologe, clock or watch.
[3] Regulator.
[4] Condiment.
[5] Royal.

"But Chaucer is the Homer of his country, not only as having been the earliest of her poets (deserving to be so called), but also as being still one of her greatest. The names of Spenser, of Shakespeare, and of Milton are the only other names that can be placed on the same line with his."

To show the development of Chaucer's real genius and his perfect style, we ought to take an extract from his *House of Fame*, and set it beside the verse of the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. In the following passage of the earlier poem, he appears in his own person; at least the poet or dreamer is in the course of it more than once addressed by the name of Geoffrey, and he seems to describe in it his own occupation and habits of life. It is addressed to him by the golden but living Eagle, who has carried him up into the air in his talons, and by whom the marvellous sights he relates are shown and explained to him:—

First, I, that in my feet have thee,
Of whom thou hast great fear and wonder,

Am dwelling with the God of Thunder,
Which men ycallen Jupiter,
That doth me flyen full oft fer [1]
To do all his commandement;
And for this cause he hath me sent
To thee; harken now by thy trouth;
Certain he hath of thee great routh,[2]
For that thou hast so truëly
So long served ententifly [3]
His blinde nephew Cupido,
And the fair queen Venus also,
Withouten guerdon ever yet;
And natheless [4] hast set thy wit
Althoughe in thy head full lit is
To make bokes, songs, and dittes,
In rhime or elles in cadence,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love and of his servants eke,
That have his service sought and seek;
And painest thee to praise his art,
Although thou haddest never part;
Wherefore, so wisely God me bless,
Jovis yhalt [5] it great humbless,
And virtue eke, that thou wilt make
Anight [6] full oft thine head to ache
In thy study, so thou ywritest,
And ever more of Love enditest,
In honour of him and praisings,
And in his folkes furtherings,
And in their matter all devisest,
And not him ne his folk despisest,
Although thou may'st go in the dance
Of them that him list not avance:
Wherefore, as I now said, ywis,
Jupiter considreth well this,
And als, beau sire,[7] of other things,
That is, that thou hast no tidings
Of Loves folk if they be glade,
Ne of nothing else that God made,
And not only fro [8] fer countree
That no tidinges comen to thee,
Not of thy very neighebores,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou hearest neither that ne this;
For, when thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy reckonings,
Instead of rest and of new things,
Thou goest home to thine house anon,
And, all so dumb as any stone,

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[1] Far.
[2] Ruth, pity.
[3] Attentively.
[4] Nevertheless.
[5] Jove held.
[6] O'nights, at night.
[7] Fair sir.
[8] From.

Thou sittest at another book,
Till fully dazed is thy look,
And livest thus as an hermit,
Although thine abstinence is lit;
And therefore Jovis, through his grace,
Will that I bear thee to a place
Which that yhight the House of Fame, &c.

From the mention of his *reckonings* in this passage, Tyrwhitt conjectures that Chaucer probably wrote the *House of Fame* while he held the office of Comptroller of the Customs of Wools, to which he was appointed in 1374. It may be regarded, therefore, as one of the productions of the second or middle stage of his poetical life, as the *Romaunt of the Rose* is supposed to have been the first. The *House of Fame* is in three books, comprising in all 2190 lines, and is an exceedingly interesting poem on other accounts, as well as for the reference which Chaucer seems to make in it to himself, and the circumstances of his own life. In one place, we have an illustration drawn from a novelty which we might have thought had hardly yet become familiar enough for the purposes of poetry. The passage, too, is a sample of the wild, almost grotesque imagination, and force of expression, for which the poem is remarkable :—

What did this Æolus? but he
Took out his blacke trompe of brass,
That fouler than the devil was,
And gan this trompe for to blow
As all the world should overthrow.
Throughout every region
Ywent this foule trompes soun,
As swift as pellet out of gun
When fire is in the powder run :
And such a smoke gan out wend
Out of the foule trompes end,
Black, blue, and greenish, swartish, red,
As doeth where that men melt lead,
Lo all on high from the tewel :[1]
And thereto one thing saw I well,
That aye the ferther that it ran
The greater wexen it began,
As doth the river from a well;
And it stank as the pit of hell.

Through such deeper thinking and bolder writing as we have in the *House of Fame*, Chaucer appears to have advanced from the descriptive luxuriance of the *Romaunt of the Rose* to his most matured style in the *Canterbury Tales*. This is not only his greatest work, but it towers above all else that he has written, like some palace or cathedral ascending with its broad and lofty dimensions from among the common buildings of a city. His genius is another thing here altogether from what it is in his other writings. Elsewhere he seems at work only for the day that is passing over him; here, for all time. All his poetical faculties put forth a strength in the *Canterbury Tales* they have nowhere else shown; not only is his knowledge of life and character greater, his style firmer, clearer, more flexible, and more expressive, his humour more subtle and various, but his fancy is more nimble-winged, his imagination far richer and more gorgeous, his sensibility infinitely more delicate and more profound. And this great work of Chaucer's is nearly as remarkably distinguished by its peculiar character from the great works of other poets as it is from the rest of his own compositions. Among ourselves at least, if we except Shakespeare, no other poet has yet arisen to rival the author of the *Canterbury Tales* in the entire assemblage of his various powers. Spenser's is a more aërial, Milton's a loftier song; but neither possesses the wonderful combination of contrasted and almost opposite characteristics which we have in Chaucer:—the sportive fancy, painting and gilding everything, with the keen, observant, matter-of-fact spirit that looks through whatever it glances at; the soaring and creative imagination, with the homely sagacity, and healthy relish for all the realities of things; the unrivalled tenderness and pathos, with the quaintest humour and the most exuberant merriment; the wisdom at once and the wit; the all that is best, in short, both in poetry and in prose, at the same time.

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[1] Funnel.

Finally we should mention the Chaucerian apocrypha, including the *Court of Love*, and the extremely charming and picturesque dream allegory *The Flower and the Lefe*. The latter seems to have been written by a woman, as late as 1450. It is a delicate vision; and the faint mediæval charm also informs the *Assembly of Ladies*, evidently written by the same authoress. As for the *Court of Love* it is now regarded as a kind of literary forgery—a directly archaistic exercise composed by some ingenious scholar about 1540.

JOHN GOWER

Contemporary with Chaucer, and probably born a few years earlier, though of the two he survived to the later date, for his death did not take place till the year 1408, was John Gower.

Moral Gower, as he is commonly designated, is the author of three great poetical works (sometimes spoken of as one, though they do not seem to have had any connection of plan or subject):—the *Speculum Meditantis*, which is in French; the *Vox Clamantis*, which is in Latin; and the *Confessio Amantis*, which is in English. The first consists of twelve divisions on Vices and Virtues. The *Vox Clamantis* was edited for the Roxburghe Club in 1850 by the Rev. H. G. Coxe. It consists of seven Books in Latin elegiacs. "The greater bulk of the work," says Dr. Pauli, "the date of which its editor is inclined to fix between 1382 and 1384, is rather a moral than an historical essay; but the First Book describes the insurrection of Wat Tyler in an allegorical disguise; the poet having a dream on the 11th of June, 1381, in which men assumed the shape of animals. The Second Book contains a long sermon on fatalism, in which the poet shows himself no friend to Wiclif's tenets, but a zealous advocate for the reformation of the clergy. The Third Book points out how all orders of society must suffer for their own vices and demerits; in illustration of which he cites the example of the secular clergy. The Fourth Book is dedicated to the cloistered clergy and the friars, the Fifth to the military; the Sixth contains a violent attack on the lawyers; and the Seventh subjoins the moral of the whole, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as interpreted by Daniel."[1] The allusion in the title seems to be to St. John the Baptist, and to the general clamour then abroad in the country. The *Confessio Amantis* has been several times printed.

We will avail ourselves of Dr. Pauli's account of the course in which the work proceeds:—"The poem opens by introducing the author himself, in the character of an unhappy lover in despair. Venus appears to him, and, after having heard his prayer, appoints her priest called Genius, like the mystagogue in the picture of Cebes, to hear the lover's confession. This is the frame of the whole work, which is a singular mixture of classical notions, principally borrowed from Ovid's *Ars Amandi*, and of the purely mediæval idea, that as a good Catholic the unfortunate lover must state his distress to a father confessor. This is done with great regularity and even pedantry: all the passions of the human heart, which generally stand in the way of love, being systematically arranged in the various books and subdivisions of the work. After Genius has fully explained the evil affection, passion, or vice under consideration, the lover confesses on that particular point; and frequently urges his boundless love for an unknown beauty, who treats him cruelly, in a tone of affectation which would appear highly ridiculous in a man of more than sixty years of age, were it not a common characteristic of the poetry of the period. After this profession the confessor opposes him, and exemplifies the fatal effects of each passion by a variety of opposite stories, gathered from many sources, examples being then, as now, a favourite mode of inculcating instruction and reformation. At length, after a frequent and tedious recurrence of the same process, the confession is terminated by some final injunctions of the priest—the lover's petition in a strophic poem addressed to Venus—the bitter judgment of the goddess, that he should remember his old age and leave off such fooleries . . . his cure from the wound caused by the dart of love, and his absolution, received as if by a pious Roman Catholic.[1]

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[1] Introductory Essay to *Confessio Amantis*.

Such a scheme as this, pursued through more than thirty thousand verses, promises perhaps more edification than entertainment; but the amount of either that is to be got out of the *Confessio Amantis* is not considerable. Ellis, after charitably declaring that so long as Moral Gower keeps to his morality he is "wise, impressive, and sometimes almost sublime," is compelled to add, "But his narrative is often quite petrifying; and, when we read in his work the tales with which we had been familiarized in the poems of Ovid, we feel a mixture of surprise and despair at the perverse industry employed in removing every detail on which the imagination had been accustomed to fasten. The author of the *Metamorphoses* was a poet, and at least sufficiently fond of ornament; Gower considers him as a mere annalist; scrupulously preserves his facts; relates them with great perspicuity; and is fully satisfied when he has extracted from them as much morality as they can be reasonably expected to furnish."[2] In many cases this must be little enough.

BARBOUR (1316?–1395)

This latter part of the fourteenth century is also the age of the birth of Scottish poetry; and Chaucer had in that dialect a far more worthy contemporary than his friend and fellow-Englishman Gower, in John Barbour. Of Barbour's personal history but little is known. He was a churchman, and had attained to the dignity of archdeacon of Aberdeen by the year 1357; so that his birth cannot well be supposed to have been later than 1320. He is styled archdeacon of Aberdeen in a passport granted to him in that year by Edward III. at the request of David de Bruce (that is, King David II. of Scotland), to come into England with three scholars in his company, for the purpose, as it is expressed, of studying in the University of Oxford; and the protection is extended to him and his companions while performing their scholastic exercises, and generally while remaining there, and also while returning to their own country. It may seem strange that an archdeacon should go to college; but Oxford appears to have been not the only seat of learning to which Barbour resorted late in life with the same object. Three other passports, or safe-conducts, are extant which were granted to him by Edward at later dates:—the first, in 1364, permitting him to come, with four horsemen, from Scotland, by land or sea, into England, to study at Oxford, or elsewhere, as he might think proper; the second, in 1365, by which he is authorized to come into England, and travel throughout that kingdom, with six horsemen as his companions, as far as to St. Denis in France; and the third, in 1368, securing him protection in coming, with two valets and two horses, into England, and travelling through the same to the king's other dominions, on his way to France (*versus Franciam*) for the purpose of studying there, and in returning thence. Yet he had also been long before this employed, and in a high capacity, in civil affairs. In 1357 he was appointed by the bishop of Aberdeen one of his two Commissioners deputed to attend a meeting at Edinburgh about the ransom of the king. Nothing more is heard of him till 1373, in which year he appears as one of the auditors of Exchequer, being styled archdeacon of Aberdeen, and clerk of probation (*clerico probacionis*) of the royal household. In his later days he appears to have been in the receipt of two royal pensions, both probably bestowed upon him by Robert II., who succeeded David II. in 1370; the first one of 10*l.* Scots from the customs of Aberdeen, the other one of 20*s.* from the *borough mails*, or city rents, of the same town. An entry in the records of Aberdeen for 1471 states on the authority of the original roll, now lost, that the latter was expressly granted to him "for the compilation of the book of *Acts of King Robert the First.*" In a passage occurring in the latter part of this work, he himself tells us that he was then compiling it in the year 1375. All that is further known of him is, that his death took place towards the close of 1395. Besides his poem commonly called *The Bruce*, another metrical work of his entitled *The Broite*, or *The Brute*, being a deduction of the history of the Scottish kings from Brutus, is frequently referred to by the chronicler Wynton in the next age; but no copy of it is now believed to exist. Of *The Bruce* the first critical edition was that by Pinkerton, published in 3 vols. 8vo. at London in 1790; the last and best, is that by the Rev. Dr. John Jamieson, forming the first volume of *The Bruce and Wallace*, 2 vols. 4to. Edinburgh, 1820.

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[1] Introductory Essay, p. xxxiv.

[2] *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, i. 179.

The Scotch in which Barbour's poem is written was undoubtedly the language then commonly in use among his countrymen, for whom he wrote and with whom his poem has been a popular favourite ever since its first appearance. By his countrymen, of course, we mean the inhabitants of southern and eastern, or Lowland Scotland, not the Celts or Highlanders, who have always been and still are as entirely distinct a race as the native Irish are, and always have been, from the English in Ireland. But in Barbour's day, the language of Teutonic Scotland was distinguished from that of the south of England (which had now acquired the ascendancy over that of the northern counties as the literary dialect), by little more than the retention, perhaps, of a good many vocables which had become obsolete among the English, and a generally broader enunciation of the vowel sounds. Hence Barbour never supposes that he is writing in any other language than English any more than Chaucer; that is the name by which not only he, but his successors Dunbar and even Lyndsay, always designate their native tongue: down to the latter part of the sixteenth century, by the term *Scotch* was generally understood what is now called the *Gaelic*. Divested of the grotesque and cumbrous spelling of the old manuscripts, the language of Barbour is quite as intelligible at the present day to an English reader as that of Chaucer; the obsolete words and forms are not more numerous in the one writer than in the other, though some that are used by Barbour may not be found in Chaucer, as many of Chaucer's are not in Barbour; the chief general distinction, as we have said, is the greater breadth given to the vowel sounds in the dialect of the Scottish poet.

The Bruce is a very long poem, comprising between twelve and thirteen thousand lines, in octosyllabic metre, which the two last editors have distributed, Pinkerton into twenty, Jamieson into fourteen, Books. It relates the history of Scotland, and especially the fortunes of the great Bruce, from the death of Alexander III. in 1286, or rather, from the competition for the crown, and the announcement of the claims of Edward I. as lord paramount, on that of his daughter, Margaret the Maiden of Norway, in 1290—the events of the first fifteen or sixteen years, however, before Bruce comes upon the stage, being very succinctly given—to the death of Bruce (Robert I.) in 1329, and that of his constant associate and brother of chivalry, Lord James Douglas, the bearer of the king's heart to the Holy Land, in the year following. The 12,500 verses, or thereby, may be said therefore to comprehend the events of about twenty-five years; and Barbour, though he calls his work a "romaunt," as being a narrative poem, professes to relate nothing but what he believed to be the truth, so that he is to be regarded not only as the earliest poet but also as the earliest historian of his country. Fordun, indeed, was his contemporary, but the Latin chronicle of that writer was probably not published till many years after his death. And to a great extent Barbour's work is and has always been regarded as being an authentic historical monument; it has no doubt some incidents or embellishments which may be set down as fabulous: but these are in general very easily distinguished from the main texture of the narrative, which agrees substantially with the most trustworthy accounts drawn from other sources, and has been received and quoted as good evidence by all subsequent writers and investigators of Scottish history, from Andrew of Wynton to Lord Hailes inclusive.

Barbour has nothing of Chaucer's delicate feeling of the beautiful, nor his grand inventive imagination, nor his wit, or humour; but in mere narrative and description he is, with his clear, strong, direct diction, in a high degree both animated and picturesque, and his poem is pervaded by a glow of generous sentiment, well befitting its subject, and lending grace as well as additional force to the ardent, bounding spirit of life with which it is instinct from beginning to end. The following passage, which occurs near the commencement, has been often quoted (at least in part); but it is too remarkable to be omitted in any exemplification of the characteristics of Barbour's poetry. He is describing the oppressions endured by the Scots during the occupation of their country by the English king, Edward I., after his deposition of his puppet Baliol:—

And gif that ony man them by
Had ony thing that wes worthy,
As horse, or hund, or other thing,
That war pleasand to their liking!
With right or wrang it wald have they.
And gif ony wald them withsay,
They suld swa do, that they suld tine[1]
Other[2] land or life, or live in pine.
For they dempt[3] them efter their will,
Takand na kepe[4] to right na skill.[5]
Ah! what they dempt them felonly![6]
For gud knightes that war worthy,
For little enchesoun[7] or then[8] nane
They hangit be the neckbane.
Als[9] that folk, that ever was free,
And in freedom wont for to be,
Through their great mischance and folly,
Wor treated then sa wickedly,
That their faes[10] their judges ware:
What wretchedness may man have mair?[11]
Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom mays[12] man to have liking;[13]
Freedom all solace to man gives:
He lives at ease that freely lives!
A noble heart may have nane ease,
Ne elles nought that may him please
Giff freedom failye: for free liking
Is yarnit[14] ower[15] all other thing.
Na he that aye has livit free
May nought knaw well the property,[16]
The anger, na the wretched doom,
That is couplit[17] to foul thirldoom.[18]
But gif he had assayit it,
Then all perquer[19] he suld it wit;
And suld think freedom mair to prise
Than all the gold in warld that is.

Barbour's design, no doubt, was to effect by means of a light and sportive conclusion an easy and harmonious descent from the height of declamation and passion to which he had been carried in the preceding lines. Throughout his long work he shows, for his time, a very remarkable feeling of the *art* of poetry, both by the variety which he studies in the disposition and treatment of his subject, and by the rare temperance and self-restraint which prevents him from ever overdoing what he is about either by prosing or raving. Even his patriotism, warm and steady as it is, is wholly without narrowness or ferocity: he paints the injuries of his country, the heroism of her champions and deliverers with force and sympathy; but he never runs into either the gasconading exaggerations or the invectives which would have better pleased the generality of those for whom he wrote. His understanding was too enlightened, and his heart too large, for that. His poem stands in this respect in striking contrast to that of Harry, the blind minstrel, on the exploits of Wallace, to be afterwards noticed; but each poet suited his hero—Barbour, the magnanimous, considerate, and far-seeing king; Blind Harry, the indomitable popular champion, with his one passion and principle, hatred of the domination of England, occupying his whole soul and being.

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[1] Lose.
[2] Either.
[3] Doomed, judged.
[4] Taking no heed, paying no regard.
[5] Reason.
[6] Ah! how cruelly they judged them!
[7] Cause.
[8] Both the sense and the metre seem to require that this *then* (in orig. *than*) should be transferred to the next line; "they hangit then."
[9] Also, thus.
[10] Foes.
[11] More.
[12] Makes.
[13] Pleasure.
[14] Yearned for, desired.
[15] Over, above.
[16] The quality, the peculiar state or condition?
[17] Coupled, attached.
[18] Thraldom.
[19] Exactly.

Compound English Prose.—Mandeville; Trevisa; Wiclif; Chaucer

To the fourteenth century belong the earliest specimens of prose composition in our present mixed English that have been preserved.

Sir John de Mandeville, whose *Voyages and Travels*, a singular repertory of the marvellous legends of the Middle Ages, have been often printed is a very mythical person. The author's own account of himself and of his book is given in an introductory address, or Prologue:—

> And, for als moch as it is long time passed that there was no general passage ne vyage over the sea, and many men desiren for to hear speak of the Holy Lond, and han[1] thereof great solace and comfort, I, John Maundeville, knight, all be it I be not worthy, that was born in Englond, in the town of Saint Albons, passed the sea in the year of our Lord Jesu Christ 1322, in the day of Saint Michel; and hider-to have ben[2] long time over the sea, and have seen and gone thorough many divers londs, and many provinces, and kingdoms, and isles, and have passed thorough Tartary, Persie, Ermonie[3] the Little and the Great; thorough Libye, Chaldee, and a great part of Ethiop; thorough Amazoyn, Ind the Lass and the More, a great party; and thorough out many other isles, that ben abouten Ind; where dwellen many divers folks, and of divers manners and laws, and of divers shapps of men. Of which londs and isles I shall speak more plainly hereafter. And I shall devise you some party of things that there ben,[4] whan time shall ben after

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[1] Have. [2] Been. [3] Armenia. [4] Be.

it may best come to my mind; and specially for hem[1] that will[2] and are in purpose for to visit the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the holy places that are thereabout. And I shall tell the way that they should holden thider. For I have often times passed and ridden the way, with good company of many lords, God be thonked.

And ye shull understond that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it agen out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understond it. But lords and knights, and other noble and worthy men, that con[3] Latin but little, and han ben beyond the sea, knowen and understonden gif I err in devising, for forgetting or else; that they mowe[4] redress it and amend it. For things passed out, of long time, from a man's mind, or from his sight, turnen soon into forgetting; because that mind of man ne may not ben comprehended ne withholden for the freelty of mankind.

The English version of the book cannot be later than 1400. There is no historical trace of any such person as Mandeville, and the work is now supposed to be a compilation of travels from various sources, with some mingling of personal experience, by a physician of Liège. But the book is a triumph of story-telling and emphatically achieves the charm of real prose style.

The oldest English translation we have of the Bible is that of Wiclif. John de Wiclif, or Wycliffe, died at about the age of sixty in 1384, and his translation of the Scriptures from the Vulgate appears to have been finished two or three years before. He is also the author of many original writings in his own language, in defence of his reforming views in theology and church government. His style is sometimes slovenly, though animated by a popular force or boldness. The Wiclifite party followed him with a mass of tracts and sermons, quick with partisan hate, but often quaint and lively in expression.

Chaucer is the author of two separate works in prose; a translation of *Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ*, printed by Caxton, in folio, without date, under the title of *The Boke of Consolacion of Philosophie, wich that Boecius made for his Comforte and Consolacion*; a *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, addressed to his son Lewis, in 1391, and printed (at least in part) in the earlier editions of his works. But, perhaps, the most highly finished, and in other respects also the most interesting, of the great poet's prose compositions are the "Tale of Meliboeus" and the "Parson's Tale," in the *Canterbury Tales*. The "Parson's Tale," which winds up the *Canterbury Tales*, as we possess the work, is a long moral discourse, which, for the greater part, is not very entertaining, but which yet contains some passages curiously illustrative of the age in which it was written. Here is part of what occurs in the section headed De Superbia (Of Pride), the first of the seven mortal sins.

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[1] Them ('em). [2] Wish. [3] Know. [4] May.

Now ben there two manner of prides: that on of hem [1] is within the heart of a man, and that other is without; of which soothly these foresaid things, and mo [2] than I have said, appertainen to pride that is within the heart of man. And there be other spices [3] that ben withouten; but, natheless, that on of these spices of pride is sign of that other, right as the gay levesell [4] at the tavern is sign of the wine that is in the cellar. And this is in many things, as in speech and countenance, and outrageous array of clothing; for certes if there had ben no sin in clothing Christ wold not so soon have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilk rich man in the Gospel: and, as Saint Gregory saith, that precious clothing is culpable, for the dearth of it, and for his softness, and for his strangeness and disguising, and for the superfluity or for the inordinate scantiness of it. Alas! may not a man see as in our days the sinful costlew array of clothing, and namely [5] in too much superfluity, or else in too disordinate scantness.

As to the first sin, in superfluity of clothing, which that maketh it so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of the embrouding,[6] the disguising, indenting or barring, ownding,[7] paling,[8] winding, or bending, and semblable waste of cloth in vanity; but there is also the costlew furring in hir gowns, so moch pounsoning [9] of chisel to maken holes, so moch dagging [10] of shears, with the superfluity in length of the foresaid gowns, trailing in the dong and in the mire, on horse and eke on foot, as well of man as of woman, that all thilk training is verily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, threadbare, and rotten with dong, rather than it is yeven to the poor, to great damage of the foresaid poor folk, and that in sondry wise; this is to sayn, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poor people, for the scarceness; and, furthermore, if so be that they wolden yeve swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to the poor people, it is not convenient to wear for hir estate, ne suffisant to bote [11] hir necessity, to keep hem fro the distemperance of the firmament. . . .

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[1] The one of them.
[2] More.
[3] Species, kinds.
[4] The meaning of this word, which at a later date appears to have been pronounced and written *lessel*, is unknown. See Tyrwhitt's note to *Canterbury Tales*, v. 4059, and Glossary, *ad verbum*; and note by the editor, Mr. Albert Way, on pp. 300, 301, of the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, vol i., printed for the Camden Society, 4to. Lond. 1843.
[5] Especially.
[6] Embroidering.
[7] Imitating waves.
[8] Imitating pales.
[9] Punching.
[10] Slitting.
[11] Help (boot).

PRINTING IN ENGLAND.—CAXTON (1422?—1491?)

The art of printing had been practised nearly thirty years in Germany before it was introduced either into England or France. At length a citizen of London secured a conspicuous place to his name for ever in the annals of our national literature, by being, so far as is known, the first of his countrymen that learned the new art, and certainly the first who either practised it in England, or in printing an English book. William Caxton was born, as he tells us himself, in the Weald of Kent, it is supposed about the year 1422. Thirty years after this date his name is found among the members of the Mercers' Company in London. Later in life he appears to have repeatedly visited the Low Countries, at first probably on business of his own, but afterwards in a sort of public capacity,—having in 1464 been commissioned, along with another person, apparently also a merchant, by Edward IV. to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Duke of Burgundy. He was afterwards taken into the household of Margaret Duchess of Burgundy. It was probably while resident abroad, in the Low Countries or in Germany, that he commenced practising the art of printing. He is commonly supposed to have completed before the end of the year 1471 impressions of Raoul le Fevre's *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*, in folio; of the Latin oration of John Russell on Charles Duke of Burgundy being created a Knight of the Garter, in quarto; and of an English translation by himself of Le Fevre's above-mentioned history, in folio; "whyche sayd translacion and werke," says the title, "was begonne in Brugis in 1468, and ended in the holy cyte of Colen, 19 Sept. 1471." But these words undoubtedly refer only to the translation; and sufficient reasons have lately been advanced by Mr. Knight for entertaining the strongest doubts of any one of the above-mentioned books having been printed by Caxton. The earliest work now known, which we have sufficient grounds for believing to have been printed by Caxton, is another English translation by himself, from the French, of a moral treatise entitled *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, a folio volume, which is stated to have been "finished the last day of March, 1474." It is generally supposed that this work was printed in England; and the year 1474 accordingly is assumed to have been that of the introduction of the art into this country. It is certainly known that Caxton was resident in England in 1477, and had set up his press in the Almonry, near Westminster Abbey, where he printed that year, in folio, *The Dictes and Notable Wyse Sayenges of the Phylosophers*, translated from the French by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers. From this time Caxton continued both to print and translate with indefatigable industry for about a dozen years, his last publication with a date having been produced in 1490, and his death having probably taken place in 1491 or 1492. We must also remember Caxton as one who in his translations deliberately strove to form an English Prose Style. Before he died he saw the admirable art which he had introduced into his native country already firmly established there, and the practice of it extensively diffused. Theodore Rood, John Lettow, William Machelina, and Wynkyn de Worde, foreigners, and Thomas Hunt, an Englishman, all printed in London both before and after Caxton's death. It is probable that the foreigners had been his assistants, and were brought into the country by him. A press was also set up at St. Albans by a school-master of that place, whose name has not been preserved; and books began to be printed at Oxford so early as the year 1478.

ENGLISH CHRONICLERS

The series of our Modern English chronicles may perhaps be most properly considered as commencing with John de Trevisa's translation of Higden, with various additions, which, as already mentioned, was finished in 1387, and was printed, with a continuation to 1460, by Caxton, in 1482. After Trevisa comes John Harding, who belongs to the fifteenth century; his metrical *Chronicle of England* coming down to the reign of Edward IV.[1] The metre is melancholy enough; but the part of the work relating to the author's own times is not without value. Harding is chiefly notorious as the author, or at least the collector and producer, of a great number of charters and other documents attesting acts of fealty done by the Scottish to the English kings, which are now generally admitted to be forgeries. Caxton himself must be reckoned our next English chronicler, as the author both of the continuation of Trevisa and also of the concluding part of the volume entitled *The Chronicles of England*, published by him in 1480,—the body of which is translated from a Latin Chronicle by Douglas, a monk of Glastonbury, who lived in the preceding century. To this period we may also in part assign the better-known *Concordance of Histories of Robert Fabyan*, citizen and draper of London; though the author only died in 1512, nor was his work printed till a few years later. Fabyan's history, which begins with Brutus and comes down to his own time, is in the greater part merely a translation from the preceding chroniclers; its chief value consists in a number of notices it has preserved relating to the city of London.[1]

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[1] First printed by Grafton in 1543. The most recent edition is that by Sir H. Ellis, 4to. Lond. 1812.

Bishop Pecock; Sir John Fortescue

Of the English theological writers of the age immediately following that of Wiclif, the most noteworthy is Reynold Pecock, bishop of St. Asaph and afterwards of Chichester. As may be inferred from these ecclesiastical dignities, Pecock was no Wiclifite, but a defender of the established system both of doctrine and of church government: he tells us himself, in one of his books, that twenty years of his life had been spent for the greater part in writing against the Lollards. But, whatever effect his arguments may have produced upon those against whom they were directed, they gave little satisfaction to the more zealous spirits on his own side, who probably thought that he was too fond of reasoning with errors demanding punishment by a cautery sharper than that of the pen; and the end was, that he was himself, in the year 1457, charged with heresy, and, having been found guilty, was first compelled to read a recantation, and to commit fourteen of his books, with his own hands, to the flames at St. Paul's Cross, and then deprived of his bishopric, and consigned to an imprisonment in which he was allowed the use neither of writing materials nor of books, and in which he is supposed to have died about two years after. One especial heresy alleged to be found in his writings was that in regard to matters of faith the church was not infallible. Bishop Pecock's numerous treatises are partly in English, partly in Latin. Of those in English the most remarkable is one entitled *The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, which he produced in 1449. A short specimen, in which the spelling, but only the spelling, is modernized, will give some notion of his manner of writing, and of the extent to which the language had been adapted to prose eloquence or reasoning of the more formal kind in that age:—

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[1] First published in 1516. The last edition is that of Sir H. Ellis, London, 4to. 1811.

"Say to me, good sir, and answer hereto: when men of the country upland bring into London in Midsummer eve branches of trees fro Bishop's Wood, and flowers fro the field, and take them[1] to citizens of London for to therewith array her[2] houses, should men of London, receiving and taking those branches and flowers, say and hold that those branches grew out of the carts which brought them[3] to London, and that those carts or the hands of the bringers were grounds and fundaments of those branches and flowers? God forbid so little wits be in her heads. Certes, though Christ and his apostles were now living at London, and would bring, so as is now said, branches from Bishop's Wood, and flowers from the fields, into London, and would them deliver them to men, that they make therewith her houses gay, into remembrance of St. John Baptist, and of this that it was prophesied of him, that many should joy of his birth, yet those men of London, receiving so those branches and flowers, ought not to say and feel that those branches and flowers grew out of Christ's hands. Those branches grew out of the boughs upon which they in Bishop's Wood stood, and those boughs grew out of stocks or truncheons, and the truncheons or shafts grew out of the root, and the root out of the next earth thereto, upon which and in which the root is buried. So that neither the cart, neither the hands of the bringers, neither those bringers be the grounds or fundaments of those branches."

The good bishop, we see, has a popular and lively as well as clear and precise way of putting things. It may be doubted, nevertheless, if his ingenious illustrations would be quite as convincing to the earnest and excited innovators to whom they were addressed as they were satisfactory to himself. His prose is of great importance as the first attempt to express subtle scholastic argument in the vernacular, and his vocabulary is rich and original.

Another eminent English prose writer of this date was Sir John Fortescue (1394–1474), Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI., to whom the king is supposed to have also confided the great seal at some time during his expulsion from the throne. Fortescue is the author of various treatises, some in English, some in Latin, most of which, however, still remain in manuscript. One in Latin, which was first sent to press in the reign of Henry VIII., and has been repeatedly reprinted since, is commonly referred to under the title of *De Landibus Legum Angliæ*. It has also been several times translated into English. This treatise is drawn up in the form of a dialogue between the author and Henry's unfortunate son, Edward Prince of Wales, so barbarously put to death after the Battle of Tewkesbury. Fortescue's only English work that has been printed was probably written at a later date, and would appear to have had for its object to secure for him, now that the Lancastrian cause was beaten to the ground, the favour of the Yorkist king, Edward IV. His next important work in English is that known as *The Governance of England.* The following passage (in which the spelling is again reformed) will enable the reader to compare Fortescue as a writer with his contemporary Pecock, and is also curious both for its matter and its spirit :—

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[1] Take them, or those. [2] Their. [3] Them.

> And how so be it that the French king reigneth upon his people *dominio regali*, yet St. Lewis, sometime king there, ne any of his predecessors set never tallies ne other impositions upon the people of that land without the consent of the three estates, which, when they may be assembled, are like to the court of Parliament in England. And this order kept many of his successors till late days, that Englishmen kept such a war in France that the three estates durst not come together. And then, for that cause, and for great necessity which the French king had of goods for the defence of that land, he took upon him to set tallies and other impositions upon the commons without the assent of the three estates ; but yet he would not set any such charges, nor hath set, upon the nobles, for fear of rebellion. And, because the commons, though they have grudged, have not rebelled, nor be hardy to rebel, the French kings have yearly sithen [1] set such charges upon them, and so augmented the same charges as the same commons be so impoverished and destroyed that they may uneath [2] live. They drink water, they eat apples, with bread, right brown, made of rye. They eat no flesh, but if it be selden [3] a little lard, or of the entrails or heads of beasts slain for the nobles and merchants of the land. They wear no woollen, but if it be a poor coat under their uttermost garment, made of great canvas, and passen not their knee ; wherefore they be gartered and their thighs bare. Their wives and children gone barefoot. They may in none otherwise live ; for some of them that was wont to pay to his landlord for his tenement which he hireth by the year a scute [4] payeth now to the king, over [5] that scute, five scutes. Where-through they be artied [6] by necessity, so to watch, labour, and grub in the ground for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kind of them brought to nought. They gone crooked, and are feeble, not able to fight nor to defend the realm ; nor have they weapon, nor money to buy them weapon, withal ; but verily they live in the most extreme poverty and misery ; and yet they dwell in one of the most fertile

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[1] Since.
[2] Scarcely, with difficulty (uneasily).
[3] Seldom, on rare occasions.
[4] An *escut*, or *écu* (*d'or*), about three shillings and fourpence.
[5] In addition to, over and above.
[6] Compelled.

realms of the world. Where-through the French king hath not men of his own realm able to defend it, except his nobles, which bearen not such impositions, and therefore they are right likely of their bodies; by which cause the king is compelled to make his armies, and retinues for defence of his land, of strangers, as Scots, Spaniards, Aragoners, men of Almayne,[1] and of other nations; else all his enemies might overrun him; for he hath no defence of his own; except his castles and fortresses. Lo! the fruit of his *jus regale*.

It is in the same spirit that the patriotic Chief Justice elsewhere boasts, that there were more Englishmen hanged for robbery in one year than Frenchmen in seven, and that "if an Englishman be poor, and see another having riches which may be taken from him by might, he will not spare to do so."

Fortescue was probably born not much more than thirty years after Pecock; but the English of the judge, in vocabulary, in grammatical forms, in the modulation of the sentences, and in its air altogether, might seem to exhibit quite another stage of the language.

SIR THOMAS MALORY; LORD BERNERS

Although both Pecock and Fortescue lived to see the great invention of printing, and the latter at any rate survived the introduction of the new art into his native country, no production of either appears to have been given to the world through the press in the lifetime of the writer. Perhaps this was also the case with another prose writer of this date, the delightful author and compiler of the famous history of King Arthur, commonly known as the *Morte d'Arthur*. This work was first printed by Caxton in the year 1485. He tells us in his prologue, or preface, that the copy was given him by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, who took it out of certain books in French, and reduced it into English. Malory himself states at the end, that he finished his task in the ninth year of King Edward IV., which would be in 1469 or 1470. Malory, whoever he may have been (Leland says he was Welsh), must be admitted to show great charm of expression; his English is always idiomatic and limpid, and, in all its narrative simplicity, often rises to no common beauty and eloquence.

The book gathers up in apparent careless succession many of the finest of the French Arthurian romances, and re-tells the great stories with dignity, sweetness, and occasional melancholy. The concluding chapters of the twentieth book in particular, that narrate the actual *Morte*, have been much admired for prose cadence.

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[1] Germany.

Then Sir Lancelot, ever after, eat but little meat, nor drank, but continually mourned until he was dead; and then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwindled away. For the bishop, nor none of his fellows, might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was soon waxed shorter by a cubit than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore day and night he prayed [taking no rest], but needfully as nature required; sometimes he slumbered a broken sleep; and always he was lying grovelling upon King Arthur's and Queen Guenever's tomb; and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Sir Bors, nor none of all his fellows could make him; it availed nothing.

Oh! ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glorious transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city; yea also, ye fierce and mighty knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of arms, behold! behold! see how this mighty conqueror, King Arthur, whom in his human life all the world doubted,[1] ye also the noble Queen Guenever, which sometimes sat in her chair adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure foss, or pit, covered with clods of earth and clay! Behold also this mighty champion, Sir Lancelot, peerless of all knighthood; see now how he lieth grovelling upon the cold mould; now being so feeble and faint, that some time was so terrible; how, and in what manner, ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour so dangerous? Therefore, me thinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read; for in all [2] ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war, of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually; also me seemeth by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in following of those gracious knightly deeds; that is to say, to dread God and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign prince; and, the more that God hath given you the triumphal honour, the meeker ought ye to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world.[3]

. . . .

And so, within fifteen days, they came to Joyous Garde, and there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him. For such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service there came Sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven years all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother Sir Lancelot. . . .

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[1] Dreaded (held as *redoubtable*).

[2] It?

[3] This famous invocation is retained, as quoted by Craik; but it is an interpolation, not found in the original Caxton text, and is probably not Malory's at all.

And then Sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helm from him ; and when he beheld Sir Lancelot's visage he fell down in a swoon ; and, when he awoke, it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah, Sir Lancelet," said he, "thou wert head of all Christian knights."—"And now, I dare say," said Sir Bors, "that Sir Lancelot, there thou liest, thou wert never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield ; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse ; and thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man, that ever loved woman ; and thou wert the kindest man that ever stroke with sword ; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights ; and thou wert the meekest man, and the gentlest, that ever eat in hall among ladies ; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in rest."

With Malory should be mentioned John Bourchier, Lord Berners, who died in 1533. He was a warrior and diplomatist, who found time to translate the *Chronicles of Froissart*, the famous romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, and Guevara's *Dial of Princes*. He developed a stately and decorated style with yet a certain noble simplicity of movement that fitted his romantic matter supremely well.

Other romances which belong to the Caxton group, or the period which gave us Malory, include several Arthur and several Charlemagne Tales. *Rauf Coilyear* is the only home-made example of the latter in English ; among the versions from the French are the *Life of Charles the Great*, and the *Four Sons of Aymon*. The *Golden Legend*, the *Histories of Troy*, and the rhymes of *Sir Launfal* and *Morte Arthur* add to the list of the books which had a distinct literary influence in this romantic awakening. Nor must Herry Lonelich's vast and miserably written version of the *History of the Holy Grail* be forgotten.

ENGLISH CHAUCERIAN POETS.—OCCLEVE ; LYDGATE

The most numerous class of writers in the mother tongue belonging to this time, are the poets, by courtesy so called. Ritson in his *Bibliographia Poetica* has furnished a list of about seventy English poets who flourished in this interval. The first known writer of any considerable quantity of verse after Chaucer is Thomas Occleve, who was born about 1387–8, and died about 1450. He is the author of many minor pieces, which mostly remain in manuscript, also of a longer poem, entitled *De Regimine Principum* (On the Government of Princes), chiefly founded on a Latin work, with the same title, written in the thirteenth century by an Italian ecclesiastic Egidius, styled the Doctor Fundatissimus, and on the Latin treatise on the game of chess of Jacobus de Casulis, another Italian writer of the same age—the latter being the original of the *Game of Chess* translated by Caxton from the French, and printed by him in 1474. Occleve's poem is chiefly remembered for a drawing of Chaucer by the hand of Occleve, which is found in one of the manuscripts of it now in the British Museum.[1] Occleve repeatedly speaks of Chaucer as his master and poetic father, and was no doubt personally acquainted with the great poet. All that Occleve appears to have gained, however, from his admirable model is some initiation in that smoothness and regularity of diction of which Chaucer's writings set the first great example. His own endowment of poetical power and feeling was very small. He and his contemporaries show the complete breakdown of English versification.

By far the most famous of the versifiers of the fifteenth century is John Lydgate, the monk of Bury, who seems to have arrived at his highest point of eminence about the year 1430. Ritson has given a list of about 250 poems attributed to Lydgate. Indeed he seems to have followed the manufacture of rhymes as a sort of trade, furnishing any quantity to order whenever he was called upon. On one occasion, for instance, we find him employed by the historian Whethamstede, who was abbot of St. Albans, to make a translation into English, for the use of that convent, of the Latin legend of its patron saint. Lydgate, however, though excessively diffuse, and possessed of very little strength or originality of imagination, is a considerably livelier and more expert writer than Occleve. His memory was also abundantly stored with the learning of his age; he had travelled in France and Italy, and was intimately acquainted with the literature of both these countries. His best-known poem consists of nine books of *Tragedies*, as he entitles them, respecting the falls of princes, translated from a Latin work of Boccaccio's: it was printed at London in the reign of Henry VIII. Others are *The Temple of Glass*, a *Troy Book*, a *Life of Our Lady*, and *The Court of Sapience.*

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[1] Harl. MS. 4866. This portrait, which is a half-length, is coloured. There is a full-length portrait in another copy of *Occleve's Poems* in Royal MS. 17 D. vi.—See *Life of Chaucer*, by Sir Harris Nicolas, pp. 104, &c.

During this period of poetic degeneration in formal literature, however, were evolved ballads of dramatic force and beauty, like the song-carols as exquisite as *I Sing of a Maiden.*

SCOTTISH CHAUCERIAN POETS.—WYNTON; JAMES I.; HENRYSON; HOLLAND; BLIND HENRY

The most remarkable portion of our poetical literature belonging to the fifteenth century (as also, we shall presently find, of that belonging to the first half of the sixteenth), was contributed by Scottish writers. The earliest successor of Barbour was Andrew of Wyntown, or Wynton, a canon regular of the Priory of St. Andrews, and Prior of the Monastery of St. Serf's Inch in Lochleven, one of the establishments subordinate to that great house, who is supposed to have been born about 1350, and whose *Originale Cronykil of Scotland* appears to have been finished in the first years of the fifteenth century. It is a long poem, of nine books, written in the same octosyllabic rhyme as *The Bruce* of Barbour, to which it was no doubt intended to serve as a kind of introduction. Wynton, however, has very little of the old archdeacon's poetic force and fervour; and even his style, though in general sufficiently simple and clear, is, if anything, rather ruder than that of his predecessor—a difference which is probably to be accounted for by Barbour's frequent residences in England and more extended intercourse with the world. The *Cronykil* is principally interesting in an historical point of view, and in that respect it is of considerable value and authority, for Wynton, besides his merits as a distinct narrator, had evidently taken great pains to obtain the best information within his reach with regard to the events both of his own and of preceding times. The work begins (as was then the fashion), with the creation of the world, and comes down to the year 1408; but the first five books are occupied rather with general than with Scottish history. It is deserving of notice that a considerable portion of Wynton's *Chronicle* is not his own composition, but was the contribution of another contemporary poet; namely, all from the nineteenth chapter of the Eighth to the tenth chapter of the Ninth Book inclusive, comprising the space from 1324 to 1390, and forming about a third of the four concluding books. This he conscientiously acknowledges, in very careful and explicit terms, both at the beginning and end of the insertion. We may give what he says in the latter place, as a short sample of his style :—

"This part last treated beforn,
Fra Davy the Brus our king wes born,
While[1] his sister son Robert
The Second, our king, then called Stuert,
That nest[2] him reigned successive,
His days had ended of his live,
Wit ye well, wes nought my dite ;[3]
Thereof I dare me well acquite.
Wha that it dited, nevertheless,
He showed him of mair cunnandness
Than me commendis[4] his treatise,
But[5] favour, wha[6] will it clearly prize.
This part wes written to me send ;
And I, that thought for to mak end
Of that purpose I took on hand,
Saw it was well accordand
To my matere : I wes right glad ;
For I was in my travail sad ;
I eked[7] it here to this dite,
For to make me some respite."

This is interesting as making it probable that poetical, or at least metrical, composition in the national dialect was common in Scotland at this early date.

Another Scottish poet of this time, the style and spirit as well as the subject of whose poetry must be admitted to be exclusively national, is Henry the Minstrel, commonly called Blind Harry, author of the famous poem on *The Life and Acts of Wallace.* The testimony of the historian John Major to the time at which Henry wrote is sufficiently express : "The entire book of *William Wallace*," he says, "Henry, who was blind from his birth, composed in the time of my infancy (*meae infantiae tempore cudit*), and what things used popularly to be reported wove into popular verse, in which he was skilled." Major is believed to have been born about 1469 ; so that Henry's poem may be assigned to the end of the third quarter of the fifteenth century. *The Wallace*, which is a long poem of about 12,000 decasyllabic lines, used to be a still greater favourite than was *The Bruce* with the author's countrymen. In this judgment, however, probably few critical readers will concur. It may be remarked, by the way, that were it not for Major's statement, and the common epithet that has attached itself to his name, we should scarcely have supposed that the author of *Wallace* had been either blind from his birth or blind at all. He nowhere himself alludes to any such circumstance. Nor are his apparent literary acquirements to be very easily reconciled with Major's account, who represents him as going about reciting his verses among the nobility (*coram principibus*), and thereby obtaining food and raiment, of which, says the historian, he was worthy (*victum*, *et vestitum*, *quo dignus erat*, *nactus est*). Allusions which he makes in various places to the romance histories of Hector, of Alexander the Greater, of Julius Cæsar, and of Charlemagne show that his style of writing is more richly strewed with the more peculiar phraseology of the writers of romance than that of Barbour. But what is most remarkable is that he distinctly declares his poem to be throughout a translation from the Latin. The statement, which occurs toward the conclusion, seems too express and particular to be a mere imitation of the usage of the romance writers, many of whom appeal, but generally in very vague terms, to a Latin original for their marvels. There is, however, no trace whatever of such an original.

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[1] Till.
[2] Next.
[3] Writing.
[4] He showed himself of more cunning (skill) than I who command.
[5] Without.
[6] Whosoever.
[7] Added.

Blind Harry's notions of the literary character are well exemplified by his phrase of a "worthy clerk, baith wise and right savage." He himself, let his scholarship have been what it may, is in spirit as thorough a Scot as if he had never heard the sound of any other than his native tongue. His gruff patriotism speaks out in his opening lines—

"Our antecessors, that we suld of read,
And hold in mind their noble worthy deed,
We lat owerslide,[1] through very sleuthfulness,
And casts us ever till other business.
Till honour enemies is our hail[2] intent;
It has been seen in thir times bywent:
Our auld enemies comen of Saxons blud,
That never yet to Scotland wald do gud,
But ever on force and contrar hail their will,
How great kindness there has been kythe[3] them till.
It is weil knawn on mony divers side
How they have wrought into their mighty pride
To hald Scotland at under evermair:
But God above has made their might to pair."[4]

The Blind Minstrel is a vigorous versifier. His descriptions, however, though both clear and forcible, and even not unfrequently animated by a dramatic abruptness and boldness of expression, want the bounding airy spirit and flashing light of those of Barbour.

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[1] Allow to slip out of memory.
[2] Whole.
[3] Shown.
[4] Diminish, impair.

Of all our poets of the early part of the fifteenth century the one of greatest eminence must be considered to be King James I. of Scotland (1394–1436), even if he be only the author of *The King's Quair* (that is, the King's *quire* or *book*), his claim to which has scarcely been disputed. It is a serious poem, of nearly 1400 lines, arranged in seven-line stanzas; the style in great part allegorical; the subject, the love of the royal poet for the Lady Joanna Beaufort, whom he eventually married, and whom he is said to have first beheld walking in the garden below from the window of his prison in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle. The poem was in all probability written during his detention in England, and previous to his marriage, which took place in February, 1424, a few months before his return to his native country. In the concluding stanza James makes grateful mention of his—

> "maisters dear
> Gower and Chaucer, that on the steppes sate
> Of rhetorick while they were livand here,
> Superlative as poets laureate,
> Of morality and eloquence ornate;"

and he is evidently an imitator of the great father of English poetry, but of Chaucer in his French period. Indeed, the power of the *Roman de la Rose* itself lies strongly on the *King's Quair*. The poem, too, must be regarded as written in English rather than in Scotch, although the difference between the two dialects, as we have seen, was not so great at this early date as it afterwards became, and although James, who was in his eleventh year when he was carried away to England in 1405 by Henry IV., may not have altogether avoided the peculiarities of his native idiom. The *Quair* was first published from the only manuscript (one of the Selden Collection in the Bodleian Library), by Mr. W. Tytler at Edinburgh, in 1783; there have been several editions since. The rhyme royal stanza is musically used, and the brocaded texture of the poem weaves in much picturesque beauty and delicate feeling. Two other poems of considerable length, in a humorous style, have also been attributed to James I.—*Peebles to the Play* and *Christ's Kirk on the Green*—both in the Scottish dialect; but they are more probably the productions of his equally gifted and equally unfortunate descendant, James V. (b. 1511, d. 1542). As for the two famous comic ballads of *The Gaberlunyie Man* and *The Jolly Beggar*, which it has been usual among recent writers to speak of as by one or other of these kings, there seems to be no reasonable ground—not even that of tradition of any antiquity—for assigning them to either.

Chaucer, we have seen, appears to have been unknown to his contemporary Barbour; but after the time of James I. the Scottish poetry for more than a century bears evident traces of the imitation of the great English master. It was a consequence of the relative circumstances of the two countries, that, while the literature of Scotland, the poorer and ruder of the two, could exert no influence upon that of England, the literature of England could not fail powerfully to affect and modify that of its more backward neighbour. If it could in any circumstances have happened that Chaucer should have remained unknown in Scotland, the singular fortunes of James I. were shaped as if on purpose to transfer the manner and spirit of his poetry into the literature of that country. From that time forward the native voice of the Scottish muse was mixed with this other foreign voice. One of the earliest Scottish poets after James I. is Robert Henryson, or Henderson, the author of the vivacious pastoral of *Robin and Makyne.* He has left us a continuation or supplement to Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseide*, which is commonly printed under the title of *The Testament of Fair Creseide.* All that is known of the era of Henryson is that he was alive and very old about the close of the fifteenth century. He may therefore probably have been born about the time that James I. returned from England. Henryson is also the author of a translation into English or Scottish verse of *Æsop's Fables*, of which there is a MS. in the Harleian Collection (No. 3865), and which was printed at Edinburgh in 8vo. in 1621, under the title of *The Moral Fables of Æsop the Phrygian*, compyled into eloquent and ornamental meter, by Robert Henrison, schoolemaster of Dumferling. To Henryson, moreover, is attributed the tale of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, contained in the collection of old poetry, entitled *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane*, &c. *The Testament of Creseide* is Henryson's finest work. The picture of the alms flung by the unknowing Troilus to the unknowing loathsome leper, that is Cressida, is most imaginatively conceived, and the rhyme royal is used with much tragic effect.

Contemporary, too, with Henryson, if not perhaps rather before him, was Sir John or Richard Holland. His poem entitled *The Buke of the Howlat* (that is, the owl), a wild and rugged effusion in alliterative metre, cannot be charged as an imitation of Chaucer, or of any other English writer of so late a date.

SCOTTISH POETS, EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—GAWIN DOUGLAS; DUNBAR; LYNDSAY

It is remarkable, as we have already indicated, that while in England the new life to which poetry had awakened produced little except ribaldry and buffoonery, in Scotland, where general social civilization was much less advanced, the art had continued to be cultivated in its highest departments with great success, and the language had already been enriched with some compositions worthy of any age. Perhaps the Scottish poetry of the earlier part of the sixteenth century may be regarded as the same spring which had visited England in the latter part of the fourteenth,—the impulse originally given by the poetry of Chaucer only now come to its height in that northern clime. Gawin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, who flourished in the first quarter of the sixteenth century (born 1474?), and who is famous for his translation of the *Æneid*, the first metrical version of any ancient classic that had yet appeared in the dialect of either kingdom, affects great anxiety to eschew "Southron," or English, and to write his native tongue in all its breadth and plainness; but it does not follow, from this avoidance of English words, that he may not have formed himself to a great extent on the study of English models. His original works of *King Hart*, and the *Palace of Honour*,—which are two long allegories, full, the latter especially, of passages of great descriptive beauty,—convict Douglas of kinship with Hawes and Lydgate.

His *Æneid* has all the charm of a mediæval version of classic story. Each book of the poem is also preceded by an original prologue in which Douglas reveals much command of different metres and great expressiveness of diction.

William Dunbar (1460–1530?), that admirable master alike of serious and of comic song, may justly be styled the Chaucer of Scotland, whether we look to the wide range of his genius, or to his eminence in every style over all the poets of his country who preceded, and all who for ages came after him. That of Burns is certainly the only name among the Scottish poets that can yet be placed on the same line as that of

Dunbar; and even the inspired ploughman, though the equal of Dunbar in comic power, and his superior in depth of passion, is not the equal of the elder poet either in strength or in general fertility of imagination.

The works of this versatile and restless poet are numerous. *The Twa Maryit Weman and the Wedo* is a brilliant and pictorial satire on womenkind. The *Friars of Berwick*, which is only assigned to Dunbar, is an ordinary enough story, but narrated with great gusto. The *Golden Targe* is a Chaucerian allegory: the *Thistle and the Rose*, a marriage-song for Margaret Tudor, is a graceful and gracious poem: but the *Seven Deadly Sins* is a masterpiece of unique power. The *Flyting* is a fine example of a kind of poem fashionable among the Scots literary men of the time. Shorter poems include the *Lament for the Makers*, with its gorgeous Latin burden, the *Testament of Mr. Andrew Kennedy*, and the *Dance in the Queene's Chamber.*

Finally, to close the list, comes another eminent name, that of Sir David Lyndsay (1490–1555), whose productions are not indeed characterized by any high imaginative power, but yet display infinite wit, spirit, and variety in all the forms of the more familiar poetry. Lyndsay was the favourite, throughout his brief reign and life, of the accomplished and unfortunate James V., and survived to do perhaps as good service as any in the war against the ancient church by the tales, plays, and other products of his abounding satiric vein, with which he fed, and excited, and lashed up the popular contempt for the now crazy and tumbling fabric once so imposing and so venerated. Perhaps he also did no harm by thus taking off a little of the acrid edge of mere resentment and indignation with the infusion of a dash of merriment, and keeping alive a genial sense of the ludicrous in the midst of such serious work. The Lord Lyon King at Arms composed a *Satire of the Three Estates*, a *Dialogue between Experience and a Courtier*, and a *History of Squire Meldrum*, besides many minor poems. All are racy and live, and the *Satire* especially shows distinct genius, shrewd wit, and convincing yet mirthful sarcasm.

Prose Writers.—More; Elyot; Tyndal; Cranmer; Latimer

The fact most deserving of remark in the progress of English literature, for the first half of the sixteenth century, is the cultivation that now came to be bestowed upon the language in the form of prose composition,—a form always in the order of time subsequent to that of verse in the natural development of a national language and literature. Long before this date, indeed, Chaucer, in addition to what he did in his proper field, had given proof of how far his genius had preceded his age by several examples of composition in prose, in which may be discerned the presence of something of the same high art with which he first elevated our poetry; but, besides that his genius drew him with greatest force to poetry, and that the foreign models upon which he seems chiefly to have formed himself led him in the same direction, the state of the English language at that day perhaps fitted it better for verse than for prose, or, rather, it had not yet arrived at the point at which it could be so advantageously employed in prose as in verse. Meanwhile, however, the language, though not receiving much artificial cultivation, was still undergoing a good deal of what, in a certain sense, might be called application to literary purposes, by its employment both in public proceedings and documents, and also in many popular writings, principally on the subject of the new opinions in religion, both after and previous to the invention of printing. In this more extended use and exercise, by persons of some scholarship at least, if not bringing much artistic feeling and skill to the task of composition, it must as a mere language, or system of vocables and grammatical forms, have not only sustained many changes and modifications, but, it is probable, acquired on the whole considerable enlargement of its capacities and powers, and been generally carried forward towards maturity under the impulse of a vigorous principle of growth and expansion. Among our earliest prose writers is Sir Thomas More (1478–1535), especially in his *Life and Reign of Richard III.*, which Rastell, his brother-in-law, by whom it was first printed in 1557, from, as he informs us, a copy in More's handwriting, states to have been written by him when he was under-sheriff of London, in the year 1513.[1]

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[1] Sir Henry Ellis, however, in the Preface to his edition of Harding's *Chronicle* (4to. 1812), has called attention to what had not before been noticed, namely, that the writer speaks as if he had been present with Edward IV. in his last sickness, which More could not have been, being then (in 1483) only a child of three years old; and Sir Henry infers that the manuscript from which the tract was printed by Rastell, although in More's handwriting, could have been only a copy made by him of a narrative drawn up by some one else, very probably Cardinal Morton. But, although Morton was a person of distinguished eloquence, the style is surely far too modern to have proceeded from a writer who was born within ten years after the close of the fourteenth century, the senior of More by seventy years.

The famous *Utopia* was not translated during the author's life. Most of More's English writings are of a controversial character, and are occupied about subjects both of very temporary importance, and that called up so much of the eagerness and bitterness of the author's party zeal as considerably to disturb and mar both his naturally gentle and benignant temper and the eloquence of his style ; but this historic piece is characterized throughout by an easy narrative flow which rivals the sweetness of Herodotus. It is certainly the first English historic composition that can be said to aspire to be more than a mere chronicle.

The letter which Sir Thomas More wrote to his wife in 1528, after the burning of his house at Chelsea, affords one of the best specimens of the epistolary style of this period :—

Maistres Alyce, in my most harty wise I recommend me to you ; and, whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the losse of our barnes and of our neighbours also, with all the corn that was therein, albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is gret pitie of so much good corne lost, yet sith it hath liked hym to sende us such a chaunce, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitacion. He sente us all that we have loste ; and, sith he hath by such a chaunce taken it away againe, his pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge ther at, but take it in good worth, and hartely thank him, as well for adversitie as for prosperite. And peradventure we have more cause to thank him for our losse then for our winning ; for his wisdome better seeth what is good for vs then we do our selves. Therfore I pray you be of good chere, and take all the howsold with you to church, and there thanke God, both for that he hath given us, and for that he hath taken from us, and for that he hath left us, which if it please hym he can encrease when he will. And if it please hym to leave us yet lesse, at his pleasure be it.

I pray you to make some good ensearche what my poore neighbours have loste, and bid them take no thought therfore : for and I shold not leave myself a spone, ther shal no pore neighbour of mine bere no losse by any chaunce happened in my house. I pray you be with my children and your household merry in God. And devise some what with your frendes, what way were best to take, for provision to be made for corne for our household, and for sede thys yere comming, if ye thinke it good that we kepe the ground stil in our handes. And whether ye think it good that we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folke of our farme till we have somwhat advised us thereon. How beit if we have more nowe then ye shall nede, and which can get them other maisters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man were sodenly sent away he wote nere wether.

At my comming hither I perceived none other but that I shold tary still with the Kinges Grace. But now I shal (I think), because of this chance, get leave this next weke to come home and se you : and then shall we further devyse together uppon all thinges what order shalbe best to take. And thus as hartely fare you well with all our children as ye can wishe. At Woodestok the thirde daye of Septembre by the hand of

your louing husbande
THOMAS MORE KNIGHT.[1]

Fisher, who became bishop of Rochester, and who ultimately perished as a victim of Henry VIII., has left several volumes of sermons and other devotional compositions, which display some consciousness of the rhetorical possibilities of English prose. The name of John Leland, born 1500, ought to be mentioned here for his careful chronicling of the antiquities and libraries of England and Wales, based upon his several *Itineraries*.[2] The *Paston Letters*, which begin in 1522, cast an interesting light upon history and the familiar English life of the time.

Along with More, as one of the earliest writers of classic English prose, may be mentioned his friend Sir Thomas Elyot (1490–1546), the author of the political treatise entitled *The Governour*, and of various other works, one of which is a Latin and English Dictionary, the foundation of most of the compilations of the same kind that were published for a century afterwards. More was executed in 1535, and Elyot also died some years before the middle of the century. William Tyndal's admirable translations of the New Testament and of some portions of the Old, and also numerous tracts by the same early reformer in his native tongue, which he wrote with remarkable correctness as well as with great vigour and eloquence, appeared between 1526 and his death in 1536. Next in the order of time among our more eminent prose writers may be placed some of the distinguished leaders of the Reformation in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. and in that of Edward VI., more especially Archbishop Cranmer, whose compositions in his native tongue are of considerable volume, and are characterized, if not by any remarkable strength of expression or weight of matter, yet by a full and even flow both of words and thought. On the whole, if we consider him as the director of the divines who formulated the Book of Common Prayer, Cranmer was the greatest writer among the founders of the English Reformation.

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[1] *Sir Thomas More's Works*, by Rastell, 4to. 1557, pp. 1418, 1419.

[2] See the volume lately edited by Mrs. Toulmin Smith, 1908–9, which contain some important additions from Leland's *Collectanea*.

His two fellow-labourers, Ridley and Latimer, were also celebrated in their day for their ready popular elocution; but the few tracts of Ridley's that remain are less eloquent than learned, and Latimer's discourses are rather quaint and curious than either learned or eloquent in any lofty sense of that term. Latimer is stated to have been one of the first English students of the Greek language; but this could hardly be guessed from his Sermons, which, except a few scraps of Latin, show scarcely a trace of scholarship or literature of any kind. In addressing the people from the pulpit, this honest, simple-minded bishop, feeling no exaltation either from his position or his subject, expounded the most sublime doctrines of religion in the same familiar and homely language in which the humblest or most rustic of his hearers were accustomed to chaffer with one another in the market place about the price of a yard of cloth or a pair of shoes. Nor, indeed, was he more fastidious as to matter than as to manner; all the preachers of that age were accustomed to take a wide range over things in general, but Latimer went beyond everybody else in the miscellaneous assortment of topics he used to bring together from every region of heaven and earth,—of the affairs of the world that now is as well as of that which is to come. Without doubt his sermons must have been lively and entertaining far beyond the common run of that kind of compositions; the allusions with which they abounded to public events, and to life in all its colours and grades, from the palace to the cottage, from the prince to the peasant,—the anecdotes of his own experience and the other stories the old man would occasionally intersperse among his strictures and exhortations,—the expressiveness of his unscrupulous and often startling phraseology,—all this, combined with the earnestness, piety, and real goodness and simplicity of heart that breathed from every word he uttered, may well be conceived to have had no little charm for the multitudes that crowded to hear his living voice; even as to us, after the lapse of three centuries, these sermons of Latimer's are still in the highest degree interesting both for the touches they contain in illustration of the manners and social condition of our forefathers, and as a picture of a very peculiar individual mind. They are also of some curiosity and value as a monument of the language of the period; but to what is properly to be called its literature, as we have said, they can hardly be considered as belonging at all.

Generally it may be observed, with regard to the English prose of the earlier part of the sixteenth century that it is both more simple in its construction, and of a more purely native character in other respects, than the style which came into fashion in the latter years of the Elizabethan period. When first made use of in prose composition, the mother-tongue was written as it was spoken; even such artifices and embellishments as are always prompted by the nature of verse were here scarcely aspired after or thought of; that which was addressed to and specially intended for the instruction of the people was set down as far as possible in the familiar forms and fashions of the popular speech, in genuine native words, and direct unincumbered sentences; no painful imitation of any learned or foreign model was attempted, nor any species of elaboration whatever, except what was necessary for mere perspicuity, in a kind of writing which was scarcely regarded as partaking of the character of literary composition at all. The delicacy of a scholarly taste no doubt influenced even the English style of such writers as More and his more eminent contemporaries or immediate followers; but whatever eloquence or dignity their compositions thus acquired was not the effect of any professed or conscious endeavour to write in English as they would have written in what were called the learned tongues.

The age, indeed, of the critical cultivation of the language for the purposes of prose composition had already commenced; but at first that object was pursued in the best spirit and after the wisest methods. Erasmus, in one of his Letters, mentions that his friend Dean Colet laboured to improve his English style by the diligent perusal and study of Chaucer and the other old poets, in whose works alone the popular speech was to be found turned with any taste or skill to a literary use; and doubtless others of our earliest classic prose writers took lessons in their art in the same manner from these true fathers of our vernacular literature. And even the first professed critics and reformers of the language that arose among us proceeded in the main in a right direction and upon sound principles in the task they undertook. The first eminent English writer of this class was the celebrated Roger Ascham (1515–1568), the tutor of Queen Elizabeth, whose treatise entitled *Toxophilus*, the School or Partitions of Shooting, was published in 1545. The design of Ascham, in this performance, was not only to recommend to his countrymen the use of their old national weapon, the bow, but to set before them an example and model of a pure and correct English prose style. In his dedication of the work, To all the Gentlemen and Yeomen of England, he recommends to him that would write well in any tongue, the counsel of Aristotle,—"To speak as the common people do, to think as wise men do." From this we may perceive that Ascham had a true feeling of the regard due to the great fountain-head and oracle of the national language —the vocabulary of the common people. He goes on to reprobate the practice of many English writers, who by introducing into their compositions, in violation of the Aristotelian precept, many words of foreign origin, Latin, French, and Italian, made all things dark and hard. "Once," he says, "I communed with a man which reasoned the English tongue to be enriched and increased thereby, saying, 'Who will not praise that feast where a man shall drink at a dinner both wine, ale, and beer?' Truly, quoth I, they be all good, every one taken by himself alone: but if you put malmsey and sack, red wine and white, ale and beer and all, in one pot, you shall make a drink neither easy to be known, nor yet wholesome for the body." The English language, however, it may be observed, had even already become too thoroughly and essentially a mixed tongue for this doctrine of purism to be admitted to the letter; nor, indeed, to take up Ascham's illustration, is it universally true, even in regard to liquids, that a salutary and palatable beverage can never be made by the interfusion of two or more different kinds. Our tongue is now, and was many centuries ago, not, indeed, in its grammatical structure, but in its vocabulary, as substantially and to as great an extent Neo-Latin as Gothic; it would be as completely torn in pieces and left the mere tattered rag of a language, useless for all the purposes of speaking as well as of writing, by having the foreign as by having the native element taken out of it. Ascham in his own writings uses many words of French and Latin origin (the latter mostly derived through the medium of the French). As for his own style, both in his *Toxophilus*, and in his *Schoolmaster*, published in 1571, three years after the author's death, it is not only clear and correct, but idiomatic and muscular. That it is not rich or picturesque is the consequence of the character of the writer's mind, which was rather rhetorical than poetical. Ascham was also a notable letter-writer.

The publication of Ascham's *Toxophilus* was soon followed by an elaborate treatise dedicated to the subject of English composition—*The Art of Rhetorick*, for the use of all such as are studious of Eloquence, set forth in English, by Thomas Wilson. Wilson, whose work appeared in 1553, takes pains to impress the same principles as Ascham had laid down before him with regard to purity of style and the general rule of writing well. Great solicitude is shown by the ablest and most distinguished of those who now assumed the guardianship of the vernacular tongue to protect it from having its native character overlaid and debased by an intermixture of terms borrowed from other languages. Wilson, indeed, proceeds to complain that this was the case. While some "powdered their talk with over-sea language," others, whom he designates as "the unlearned or foolish fantastical, that smell but of learning," were wont, he says, "so to Latin their tongues," that simple persons could not but wonder at their talk, and think they surely spake by some revelation from heaven. It may be suspected, however, that this affectation of unnecessary terms, formed from the ancient languages, were not confined to mere pretenders to learning. Another well-known critical writer of this period, Puttenham, in his *Art of English Poesy*, published in 1582, but believed to have been written a good many years earlier, in like manner advises the avoidance in writing of such words and modes of expression as are used "in the marches and frontiers, or in port towns where strangers haunt for traffic sake, or yet in universities, where scholars use much peevish affectation of words out of the primitive languages;" and he warns his readers that in some books were already to be found "many inkhorn terms so ill affected, brought in by men of learning, as preachers and school-masters, and many strange terms of other languages by secretaries, and merchants, and travellers, and many dark words, and not usual nor well-sounding, though they be daily spoken at court." On the whole, however, Puttenham considers the best standard both for speaking and writing to be "the usual speech of the court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within sixty miles, and not much above." This judgment is probably correct, although the writer was a gentleman pensioner, and perhaps also a cockney by birth.

SCOTTISH PROSE WRITERS

Before the middle of the sixteenth century a few prose writers had also appeared in the Scottish dialect. *The Scottish History* *of Hector Boethius*, or Boecius (Boece or Boyce), translated from the Latin by John Bellenden, was printed at Edinburgh in 1537; and a translation by the same person of the first *Five Books of Livy* remained in MS. till it was published at Edinburgh, in 4to. in 1829; a second edition of the translation of *Boecius* having also been brought out there, in two vols., 4to., the same year. But the most remarkable composition in Scottish prose of this era is *The Complaynt of Scotland*, printed at St. Andrews in 1548, which has been variously assigned to Sir James Inglis, knight, a country gentleman of Fife, who died in 1554; to Wedderburn, the supposed author of the *Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Sangs and Ballats* (reprinted from the edition of 1621 by Sir John Grahame Dalzell, 8vo. Edinburgh, 1801); and by John Leyden, in the elaborate and ingenious *Dissertation* prefixed to his reprint of the work, 8vo. Edinburgh, 1801, to the famous poet, Sir David Lyndsay.

It is worthy of remark, that, although in this work we have unquestionably the Scottish dialect, distinctly marked by various peculiarities (indeed the author in his prologue or preface expressly and repeatedly states that he has written in Scotch, "in our Scottis langage," as he calls it), yet one chief characteristic of the modern Scotch is still wanting—the suppression of the final *l* after a vowel or diphthong—just as it is in Barbour and Blind Harry. This change, as we before remarked, is probably very modern. It has taken place in all likelihood since Scotch ceased to be generally used in writing; the principle of growth, which, after a language passes under the government of the pen, is to a great extent suspended, having recovered its activity on the dialect being abandoned again to the comparatively lawless liberty, or at least looser guardianship, of the lips.

ENGLISH POETS.—HAWES; BARKLAY

The English poetical literature of the first half of the sixteenth century may be fairly described as the dawn of a new day. Two poetic names of some note belong to the reign of Henry VII.—Stephen Hawes and Alexander Barklay. Hawes is the author of many pieces, but is chiefly remembered for his *Pastime of Pleasure, or History of Grand Amour and La Belle Pucelle*, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517, but written about two years earlier. Hawes was both a scholar and a traveller, and was perfectly familiar with the French and Italian poetry as well as with that of his own country. His *Pastime of*

Pleasure is an allegory of human life. The *Example of Virtue* is a study in the same literary fashion. Hawes is dull and laborious; but has occasional flashes of lyricism like the famous evensong couplet. Lydgate and Hawes may stand together as perhaps the two writers who, in the century and a half that followed the death of Chaucer, contributed most to carry forward the regulation and modernization of the language which he began. Alexander Barklay, who did not die till 1552, when he had attained a great age, employed his pen principally in translations, his most celebrated performance being his *Ship of Fools*, from the German of Sebastian Brandt, which was printed in 1508. Barklay, however, besides consulting both a French and a Latin version of Brandt's poem, has enlarged his original with the enumeration and description of a considerable variety of follies which he found flourishing among his own countrymen. This gives the work some value as a record of the English manners of the time; but both its poetical and its satirical pretensions are of the very humblest order. This was peculiarly a season not of achievement, but of preparation, not of accomplishing ends, but of acquiring the use of means and instruments, and also, it may be added, of the aptitude to mistake the one of these things for the other.

SKELTON

But the most vigorous poetry produced in the reign of Henry VII. and the earlier part of that of his son is undoubtedly that of Skelton. John Skelton may have been born about or soon after 1460; he studied at Cambridge, if not at both universities; began to write and publish compositions in verse between 1480 and 1490; was graduated as poet laureat (a degree in grammar, including versification and rhetoric) at Oxford before 1490; was admitted *ad eundem* at Cambridge in 1493; in 1498 took holy orders; was probably about the same time appointed tutor to the young prince Henry, afterwards Henry VIII.; was eventually promoted to be rector of Diss in Norfolk; and died in 1529 in the sanctuary at Westminster Abbey, where he had taken refuge to escape the vengeance of Cardinal Wolsey, originally his patron, but latterly the chief butt at which he had been wont to shoot his satiric shafts. As a scholar Skelton had a European reputation in his own day; and the great Erasmus has styled him *Britannicarum literarum decus et lumen* (the light and ornament of English letters). His Latin verses are distinguished by their purity and classical spirit.

As for his English poetry, it is generally more of a mingled yarn, and of a much coarser fabric. In many of his effusions indeed, poured forth in sympathy with some popular cry of the day, he is little better than a rhyming buffoon; much of his ribaldry is now nearly unintelligible. Even in the most reckless of these compositions, however, he rattles along, through sense and nonsense, with a vivacity that had been a stranger to our poetry for many a weary day; and his freedom and spirit, even where most unrefined, must have been exhilarating after the long fit of somnolency in which the English muse had dozed away the last hundred years. The *Crown of Laurel* is in the style of the worn-out allegoric school; but it includes some of his semi-doggerel but delightful addresses to girls. The *Bouge of Court* is also an allegory. *Speak Parrot* is in the author's more mixed and madder manner. The *Dirge on Edward IV.* has a fine Latin refrain. The *Tunning of Eleanor Rumming* is a wildly realistic and grotesque account of an episode of country life, coarse but full of vitality. The two satires, *Why come ye not to Court* and the *Book of Colin Clout*, are fine exercises in reckless wit. The *Boke of Philip Sparrow* is charming and tender. Many minor poems, and the morality play called *Magnificence*, attest his versatility and restless search of a fitting form. Much of Skelton's satiric verse is instinct with genuine poetical vigour, and a fancy alert, sparkling, and various, to a wonderful degree. The charm of his writing lies in its natural ease and freedom, its inexhaustible and untiring vivacity; and these qualities are found both in their greatest abundance and their greatest purity where his subject is suggestive of the simplest emotions and has most of a universal interest. His *Book of Philip Sparrow*, for instance, an elegy on the sparrow of fair Jane Scroop, slain by a cat in the nunnery of Carow, near Norwich, extending (with the "commendation" of the "goodly maid") to 1400 lines, is remarkable for elegant and elastic playfulness, and a spirit of whim that kindles into the higher blaze the longer it is kept up. The second part, or "Commendation," in particular, is throughout animated and hilarious to a wonderful degree, the refrain—

> For this most goodly flower,
> This blossom of fresh colour,
> So Jupiter me succour,
> She flourisheth new and new
> In beauty and virtue;
> *Hac claritate gemina,*
> *O Gloriosa femina,* &c.—

recurring often so suddenly and unexpectedly, yet always so naturally, has an effect like that of the harmonious evolutions of some lively and graceful dance. Have we not in this poem, by-the-by, the true origin of Skelton's peculiar dancing verse? Is it not Anacreontic, as the spirit also of the best of his poetry undoubtedly is?

SURREY; WYATT

Lyndsay, who supplied us with a landmark in Scottish literature, is supposed to have survived till about the year 1555. Before that date a revival of the higher poetry had come upon England like the rising of a new day. Two names are commonly placed together at the head of our new poetical literature, Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547), memorable in our history as the last victim of the capricious and sanguinary tyranny of Henry VIII., had already, in his short life, which was terminated by the axe of the executioner in his thirtieth year, carried away from all his countrymen the laurels both of knighthood and of song.

He appears to have been the first, at least in this age, who sought to modulate his strains after that elder poetry of Italy, which thenceforward became one of the chief fountain-heads of inspiration to that of England throughout the whole space of time over which is shed the golden light of the names of Spenser, of Shakespeare, and of Milton. Surrey's own imagination was neither rich nor soaring; and the highest qualities of his poetry, in addition, are his advance in delicacy and tenderness. It is altogether a very light and bland Favonian breeze. The poetry of his friend Wyatt is of a different character, perhaps making up for its greater ruggedness by a force and a depth of sentiment which Surrey does not reach. The poems of Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) were first published together in 1557. The introduction of the sonnet is the great achievement of the two pioneers.

To Surrey we owe the introduction into the language of our present form of blank verse, the suggestion of which he probably took from the earliest Italian example of that form of poetry, a translation of the First and Fourth Books of the *Æneid* by the Cardinal Hippolito de' Medici (or, as some say, by Francesca Maria Molza), which was published at Venice in 1541. A translation of the same two Books into English blank verse appeared in the collection of Surrey's *Poems* published by Tottel in 1557. Dr. Nott has shown that this translation was founded upon the metrical Scottish version of *Gawin Douglas*, which, although not published till 1553, had been finished, as the author himself informs us, in 1513. Tottel's miscellany of *Songs and Sonnets*, 1557, which first made public the work of these innovators, also contains lyrics by Nicholas Grimald, Lord Vaux, and other uncertain authors.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

THE peculiar genius of what is called Elizabethan literature becomes apparent before, and continues after, the reign of Elizabeth. The common name, nevertheless, is the fair and proper one. It sprung up in the age of Elizabeth, and was mainly the product of influences which belonged to that age, although their effect extended into another. It was born of and ripened by that sunny morning of a new day,—"great Eliza's golden time,"—when a general sense of security had given men ease of mind and disposed them to freedom of thought, while the economical advancement of the country put life and spirit into everything, and its growing power and renown filled and elevated the national heart. But such periods of quiet and prosperity seem only to be intellectually productive when they have been preceded and ushered in by a time of uncertainty and struggle which has tried men's spirits: the contrast seems to be wanted to make the favourable influences be felt and tell; or the faculty required must come in part out of the strife and contention.

The spirit of the new era is manifest in the first appearance of a singular work, *The Mirror for Magistrates*. It is a collection of narratives of the lives of various remarkable English historical personages, taken, in general, with little more embellishment than their reduction to a metrical form, from the common popular chronicles; the idea being borrowed from a Latin work of Boccaccio's, which had been translated and versified many years before by Lydgate, under the title of *The Fall of Princes*. It was contributed to (it is supposed about the year 1555) by Thomas Sackville, afterwards distinguished as a statesman, and ennobled by the titles of Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset. The two writers who carried on the work were Richard Baldwynne, who was in orders, and had already published a metrical version of the *Song of Solomon*, and George

Ferrers, who was a person of some rank, having sat in parliament in the time of Henry VIII., but who had latterly been chiefly known as a composer of occasional interludes for the diversion of the Court. Baldwynne and Ferrers called other writers to their assistance, among whom were Thomas Churchyard, Phaer, the translator of *Virgil*, &c.; and the book, in its form and extent, was published in a quarto volume in 1559. *The Mirror for Magistrates* immediately acquired, and for a considerable time retained, great popularity; a second edition of it was published in 1563; a third in 1571; a fourth, with the addition of a series of new lives from the fabulous history of the early Britons, by John Higgins, in 1574; a fifth, in 1587; a sixth, with further additions, in 1610, by Richard Nichols, assisted by Thomas Blenerhasset (whose contributions, however, had been separately printed in 1578).[1] The copiousness of the plan, into which any narrative might be inserted belonging to either the historical or legendary part of the national annals, and that without any trouble in the way of connection or adaptation, had made the work a receptacle for the contributions of all the ready versifiers of the day—a common, or parish green, as it were, on which a fair was held to which any one who chose might bring his wares. *The Mirror for Magistrates*, however, for all its many authors, is of note in the history of our poetry for nothing else which it contains, except the portions contributed by Sackville, consisting of only one legend, that of Henry, Duke of Buckingham (Richard III.'s famous accomplice and victim, and grandfather of Lord Stafford, the great patron of the work), and the introduction, or *Induction*, as it is called, prefixed to that narrative, which however is said to have been originally intended to stand at the head of the whole work. Both for the nature of his poetical genius, and in the history of the language, Sackville and his two poems in *The Mirror for Magistrates*—more especially this *Induction*—must be considered as forming the connecting link or bridge between Chaucer and Spenser, between the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Faërie Queene*.

Nothing is wanting to Sackville that belongs to force either of conception or of expression. In his own world of the sombre and sad, also, he is almost as great an inventor as he is a colourist; and Spenser has been indebted to him for many hints, as well as for example and inspiration in a general sense:

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[1] A reprint of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, in 2 (sometimes divided into 3) vols. 4to., was brought out by the late Mr. Hazlewood in 1815.

what slightly marks the immaturity of his style is a certain operose and constrained air, a stiffness and hardness of manner.

Among the tentative songsters of his period Sackville moves with remarkable ease of style. His imagery is intense, his poetic passion rings sincerely, and he evokes a new depth and sweetness of cadence from the measure.

Other harbingers of lyric grace were the versatile George Gascoigne (died 1577), Thomas Churchyard, and George Turberville. In miscellanies like the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, and the *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, we find songs as yet very uncertain and only occasionally tunable, but yet shyly conscious of a lyric ideal. Verse translations of a very naïve and broken-winded kind, of which the best is probably Arthur Golding's *Metamorphoses*, at least supplied material for romantic story.

ORIGIN OF THE REGULAR DRAMA.—THE MIRACLE-PLAYS

From the first introduction of dramatic representations in England, as early as the twelfth century, down to the fifteenth, or somewhat later, the only species of drama known was that styled the Miracle, or Miracle-play. The subjects of the miracle-plays were taken from the histories of the Old and New Testament, or from the legends of saints and martyrs; and, indeed, their original design was chiefly to instruct the people in religious knowledge. They were often acted as well as written by clergymen, and were exhibited in abbeys, in churches, and in churchyards, on Sundays or other holidays. It appears to have been not till some time after their first introduction that miracle-plays came to be annually represented under the direction and at the expense of the guilds or trading companies of towns, as at Chester, Coventry, York and elsewhere. These guild plays, performed at Corpus Christi or at Whitsuntide, were in some cases organized as town pageants (so called from the pageant[1] or wheeled stage of two storeys on which they were played) on a very large scale. The York cycle provided for 48 plays or pageants; the Wakefield (preserved in the Towneley collection) for 30; the Coventry and pseudo-Coventry for 42; the Chester for 24.

The characters, or *dramatis personæ*, of the miracle-plays, though sometimes supernatural or legendary, were always actual personages, biblical or imaginary; and in that respect these primitive plays approached nearer to the regular drama than those by which they were succeeded—the Morals, or Moralities, in which, not a history, but an apologue was represented, and in which the characters were all allegorical. Yet the moralities by their contemporary and often satirical intention did in their own way approach real life closely too. They appear to have gradually arisen out of the miracle-plays, in which characters very nearly approaching in their nature to the impersonated vices and virtues of the new species of drama occasionally appeared. The Devil of the miracle-plays, for example, would very naturally suggest the Vice of the moralities; which latter, however, it is to be observed, also retained the Devil of their predecessors, who was too amusing and popular a character to be discarded. Nor did the moralities altogether put down the miracle-plays: in many of the provincial towns, at least, the latter continued to be represented almost to as late a date as the former. Finally, by a process of natural transition very similar to that by which the sacred and supernatural characters of the religious drama had been converted into the allegorical personifications of the moralities, these last, about the middle of the sixteenth century, assumed new life and reality, giving birth to the first examples of regular tragedy and comedy.

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[1] Pageant: from *pagina*, a plank.

Both moralities, however, and even the more ancient miracle-plays, continued to be performed down to the very end of the sixteenth century. One of the last dramatic representations at which Elizabeth was present, was a morality entitled, *The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, which was performed before Her Majesty in 1600, or 1601. This production was printed in 1602, and was probably written not long before that time: it has been said to have been the joint production of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, the latter of whom died in 1592. The only three manuscripts of the Chester miracle-plays now extant were written in 1600, 1604, and 1607, most probably while the plays still continued to be acted. There is evidence that the ancient annual miracle-plays were acted at Tewkesbury at least till 1585, at Coventry till 1591, at Newcastle till 1598, and at Kendal down even to the year 1603.

THE 'INTERLUDES' OF JOHN HEYWOOD

Meanwhile, long before the earliest of these dates, the ancient drama had, in other hands, assumed wholly a new form. The *Interludes* of John Heywood, the earliest of which must have been written before 1521, exhibit the moral-play in a state of transition to the regular tragedy and comedy. A notion of the nature of these compositions may be collected from the plot of one of them, *A Merry Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neighbour Pratte*, printed in 1533, of which Mr. Collier gives the following account:—"A pardoner and a friar have each obtained leave of the curate to use his church,—the one for the exhibition of his relics, and the other for the delivery of a sermon—the object of both being the same, that of procuring money. The friar arrives first, and is about to commence his discourse, when the pardoner enters and disturbs him; each is desirous of being heard, and, after many vain attempts by force of lungs, they proceed to force of arms, kicking and cuffing each other unmercifully. The curate, called by the disturbance in his church, endeavours, without avail, to part the combatants; he therefore calls in neighbour Pratte to his assistance, and, while the curate seizes the friar, Pratte undertakes to deal with the pardoner, in order that they may set them in the stocks. It turns out that both the friar and the pardoner are too much for their assailants; and the latter, after a sound drubbing, are glad to come to a composition, by which the former are allowed quietly to depart."[1] Here, then, we have a dramatic fable, or incident at least, conducted not by allegorical personifications, but by characters of real life, which is the essential difference that distinguishes the true tragedy or comedy from the mere moral. Heywood's *Interludes*, however, of which there are two or three more of the same description with this (besides others partaking more of the allegorical character), are all only single acts, or, more properly, scenes, and exhibit, therefore, nothing more than the mere rudiments or embryo of the regular comedy.

UDALL'S 'RALPH ROISTER DOISTER'

The earliest English comedy, properly so called, that has yet been discovered, is commonly considered to be that of *Ralph Roister Doister*, the production of Nicholas Udall, an eminent classical scholar in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, and one of the masters, first at Eton, and afterwards at Westminster. Its existence was unknown till a copy was discovered in 1818, which perhaps (for the title-page is gone) was not printed earlier than 1566, in which year Thomas Hackett is recorded in the register of the Stationers' Company to have had a licence for printing a play entitled, *Rauf Ruyster Duster*; but the play is quoted in Thomas Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, first printed in 1551, so that it must have been written at least fifteen or sixteen years before.[1] This hypothesis would carry it back to about the same date with the latest of Heywood's *Interludes*; and it certainly was produced while that writer was still alive and in the height of his popularity. It may be observed that Wilson calls Udall's play an Interlude, which would seem to have been at this time the common name for any dramatic composition, as, indeed, it appears to have been for nearly a century preceding. The author himself, however, in his prologue, announces it as a Comedy, or Interlude, and as an imitation of the classical models of Plautus and Terence.

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[1] *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, ii. 386.

And, in truth, both in character and in plot, *Ralph Roister Doister* has every right to be regarded as a true comedy, showing indeed, in its execution, the rudeness of the age, but being in its plan, as regular and as complete as any comedy in the language. It is divided into acts and scenes as very few of the morality plays are. The *dramatis personæ* are thirteen in all, nine male and four female; and the two principal ones at least —Ralph himself, a vain, thoughtless, blustering fellow, whose ultimately baffled pursuit of the gay and rich widow Custance forms the action of the piece; and his servant, Matthew Merrygreek, a kind of flesh-and-blood representative of the Vice of the old morality-plays—are strongly discriminated, and drawn altogether with much force and spirit. The story is not very ingeniously involved, but it moves forward through its gradual development, and onwards to the catastrophe, in a sufficiently bustling, lively manner; and some of the situations, though the humour is rather farcical than comic, are very cleverly conceived and managed. The language also may be said to be on the whole, racy and characteristic, if not very polished. A few lines from a speech of one of the widow's handmaidens, Tibet Talkapace, in a conversation with her fellow-servants on the approaching marriage of their masters, may be quoted as a specimen :—

> And I heard our Nourse speake of an husbande to-day
> Ready for our mistresse ; a rich man and a gay :
> And we shall go in our French hoodes every day ;
> In our silk cassocks (I warrant you) freshe and gay ;
> In our tricke ferdigrews, and billiments of golde,
> Brave in our sutes of chaunge, seven double folde.
> Then shall we see Tibet, sires, treade the mosse so trimme ;
> Nay, why said I treade? ye shall see hir glide and swimme,
> Not lumperdee, clumperdee, like our spaniell Rig.

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[1] Collier, ii. 446.

'GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE'

Ralph Roister Doister is in certain ways a superior production to *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which, before the discovery of Udall's piece, had the credit of being the first regular English comedy. At the same time, it must be admitted that the superior antiquity assigned to *Ralph Roister Doister* is not very conclusively made out. All that we know with certainty with regard to the date of the play is, that it was in existence in 1551. The oldest edition of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is dated 1575: but how long the play may have been composed before that year is uncertain. The title-page of the 1575 edition describes it as "played on the stage not long ago in Christ's College, in Cambridge"; and Warton, on the authority of a manuscript memorandum by Oldys, the eminent antiquary of the early part of the last century, says that it was written and first printed in 1551. Wright also, in his *Historia Histrionica*, first printed in 1669, states it as his opinion that it was written in the reign of Edward VI. In refutation of all this it is alleged that it could not have been produced so early, because John Still (afterwards bishop of Bath and Wells), the author of it, was not born until 1543; and, consequently, in 1552, taking Warton's latest date, would only have been nine years old. But the evidence that Bishop Still was the author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is exceedingly slight. The play is merely stated on the title-page to have been "made by Mr. S., Master of Arts"; and even if there was, as is asserted, no other Master of Arts of Christ's College whose name began with S. at the time when this title-page was printed, the author of the play is not stated to have been of that college, nor, if he were, is it necessary to assume that he was living in 1575. On the whole, therefore, while there is no proof that *Ralph Roister Doister* is older than the year 1551, it is by no means certain that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was not written in that same year.

This "right pithy, pleasant, and merie comedie," as it is designated on the title-page, is, like Udall's play, regularly divided into acts and scenes, and, like it too, is written in rhyme—the language and versification being, on the whole, perhaps rather more easy than flowing—a circumstance which, more than any external evidence that has been produced, would incline us to assign it to a somewhat later date. There is nothing of its high seasoning in *Ralph Roister Doister*, though that play seems to have been intended only for the amusement of a common London audience. It is much rougher and more childish than its companion, yet it has some spontaneity of mirth and farcial zest, though the merriment is disfigured by brutal and pointless indecency of speech. The Second Act of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is introduced by a song,

> "I cannot eat but little meat,
> My stomach is not good," &c.,

which is the best thing in the whole play, and which is well known as one of the earliest *chansons à boire*, or drinking ballads of any merit in the language.

CHRONICLE HISTORIES.—BALE'S 'KYNGE JOHAN'; &C.

If the regular drama thus made its first appearance among us in the form of comedy, the tragic muse was at least not far behind. There is some ground for supposing, indeed, that one species of the graver drama of real life may have begun to emerge rather sooner than comedy out of the shadowy world of the old allegorical representations; that, namely, which was long distinguished from both comedy and tragedy by the name of History, or Chronicle History, consisting, to adopt Mr. Collier's definition, "of certain passages or events detailed by annalists put into a dramatic form, often without regard to the course in which they happened; the author sacrificing chronology, situation, and circumstance, to the superior object of producing an attractive play."[1] Of what may be called at least the transition from the moral-play to the history, we have an example in Bale's drama of *Kynge Johan*, which was written in all probability some years before the middle of the sixteenth century. Here, while many of the characters are still allegorical abstractions, others are real personages; King John himself, Pope Innocent, Cardinal Pandulphus, Stephen Langton, and other historical figures moving about in odd intermixture with such mere notional spectres as the Widowed Britannia, Imperial Majesty, Nobility, Clergy, Civil Order, Treason, Verity, and Sedition. The play thus occupies an intermediate place between moralities and historical plays, just as Bale's *God's Promises* connects the miracle-play with the morality.

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[1] *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, ii. 414.

'TRAGEDY OF GORBODUC'; BLANK VERSE

But the era of genuine tragedies and historical plays had already commenced some years before these last-mentioned pieces saw the light. On the 18th of January, 1562, was "shown before the Queen's most excellent Majesty," as the old title-pages of the printed play inform us, "in her Highness' Court of Whitehall, by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple," the *Tragedy of Gorboduc*, otherwise entitled the *Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex*, the production of the same Thomas Sackville who has already engaged our attention as by far the most remarkable writer in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, and of Thomas Norton, who is said to have been a puritan clergyman, and who had already acquired a poetic reputation, though in a different province of the land of song, as one of the coadjutors of Sternhold and Hopkins in their metrical version of the *Psalms*. On the title-page of the first edition, printed in 1565, which, however, was surreptitious, it is stated that the three first acts were written by Norton, and the two last by Sackville. It must be confessed, however, that no change of style gives any indication which it is easy to detect of a succession of hands; and that, judging by this criterion, we should rather be led to infer that, in whatever way the two writers contrived to combine their labours, whether by the one retouching and improving what the other had rough-sketched, or by the one taking the quieter and humbler, the other the more impassioned, scenes or portions of the dialogue, they pursued the same method throughout the piece. Charles Lamb expresses himself "willing to believe that Lord Buckhurst supplied the more vital parts."[1] At the same time he observes that "the style of this old play is stiff and cumbersome, like the dresses of its times;" and that, though there may be flesh and blood underneath, we cannot get at it. In truth, *Gorboduc* is a drama only in form. It is framed on the model of the *Senecan Tragedy*; but the dumb show between the acts betrays the natural English desire for action. In spirit and manner it is wholly undramatic. The story has no dramatic capabilities, no evolution either of action or of character, although it affords some opportunities for description and eloquent declamation; neither was there anything of specially dramatic aptitude in the genius of Sackville (to whom we may safely attribute whatever is most meritorious in the composition), any more than there would appear to have been in Spenser or in Milton, illustrious as they both stand in the front line of the poets of their country and of the world. *Gorboduc*, accordingly, is a most unaffecting and uninteresting tragedy; as would also be the noblest book of the *Faërie Queene* or of *Paradise Lost*—the portion of either poem that soars the highest—if it were transformed into a drama by merely being divided into acts and scenes, and cut up into the outward semblance of dialogue. *Gorboduc*, however, though a dull play, is in some other respects a remarkable production for the time. The language is not dramatic, but it is throughout singularly correct, easy, and perspicuous; in many parts it is even elevated and poetical; and there are some passages of strong painting not unworthy of the hand to which we owe the Induction to the Legend of the Duke of Buckingham in *The Mirror for Magistrates*. One peculiarity of the more ancient national drama retained in *Gorboduc* is the introduction, before every act, of a piece of machinery called the *Dumb Show*, in which was shadowed forth, by a sort of allegorical exhibition, the part of the story that was immediately to follow. This custom survived on the English stage down to a considerably later date: the reader may remember that Shakespeare, though he rejected it in his own dramas, has introduced the play acted before the King and Queen in *Hamlet* by such a prefigurative dumb show.[1]

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[1] *Spec. of Eng. Dram. Poets*, i. 6 (edit. of 1835).

Another expedient, which Shakespeare has also on two occasions made use of, namely, the assistance of a chorus, is also adopted in *Gorboduc*: but rather by way of mere decoration, and to keep the stage from being at any time empty, as in the Greek drama, than to carry forward or even to explain the action, as in *Henry V* and *Pericles*. These effusions of the chorus are all in rhyme, as being intended to be of the same lyrical character with those in the Greek plays; but the dialogue in the rest of the piece is in blank verse, of the employment of which in dramatic composition it affords the earliest known instance in the language. The first modern experiment in this "strange metre," as it was then called, had, as has already been noticed, been made only a few years before by Lord Surrey, in his translation of the Second and Fourth Books of the *Æneid*, which was published in 1557, but must have been written more than ten years before, Surrey having been put to death in January, 1547. In the mean time the new species of verse had been cultivated in several original compositions by Nicholas Grimald. Grimald's pieces in blank verse were first printed in 1557, along with Surrey's translation, in Tottel's collection entitled *Songs and Sonnets of Uncertain Authors*; and we are not aware that there was any more English blank verse written or given to the world till the production of *Gorboduc*. In that case, Sackville would stand as our third writer in this species of verse; but the metre is used with extraordinary monotony of effect, and without the least prophecy of the varied music it was destined to awake in English literature.

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[1] Besides the original 1565 edition of *Gorboduc*, there was another in 1569 or 1570, and a third in 1590. It was again reprinted in 1736; and it has also appeared in all the editions of Dodsley's Old Plays, 1744, 1780, and 1825. It has now been edited for the Shakespearian Society by Mr. W. D. Cooper, in the same volume with *Ralph Roister Doister*. Mr. Cooper has shown that the edition of 1590 was not, as had been supposed, an exact reprint of that of 1565. He has also given us elaborate biographies both of Norton and of Sackville, in the latter of which he has shown that Sackville, who died suddenly at the Council-table in 1608, was born in 1536, and not in 1527, as commonly supposed.

OTHER EARLY DRAMAS

Among the very few original plays of this period that have come down to us is one entitled *Damon and Pytheas*, which was acted before the queen at Christ Church, Oxford, in September, 1566, the production of Richard Edwards. His *Damon and Pytheas* is a mixture of comedy and tragedy, between which it would be hard to decide whether the grave writing or the gay is the ruder and duller. The play is in rhyme, but some variety is produced by the measure or length of the line being occasionally changed. Another surviving play produced during this interval is the *Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*, founded upon Boccaccio's well-known story, which was presented before Elizabeth at the Inner Temple in 1568, the five acts of which it consists being severally written by five gentlemen of the society, of whom one, the author of the third act, was Christopher Hatton, afterwards the celebrated dancing lord chancellor. The play, however, was not printed till 1592, when Robert Wilmot, the writer of the fifth act, gave it to the world, as the title-page declares, "newly revived, and polished according to the decorum of these days." The *Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*, which, like *Gorboduc*, has a dumb show at the commencement and a chorus at the close of every act, is said to be "the earliest English play extant the plot of which is known to be derived from an Italian novel."[1] To this earliest stage in the history of the regular drama belong, finally, some plays translated or adapted from the ancient and from foreign languages, which contributed to excite the national genius for the theatre.

SECOND STAGE OF THE REGULAR DRAMA.—PEELE; GREENE

It thus appears that numerous pieces entitled by their form to be accounted as belonging to the regular drama had been produced before the year 1580; but nevertheless no dramatic work had yet been written which had taken its place in our literature, or had almost any interest for succeeding generations on account of its intrinsic merits and apart from its mere antiquity. The next ten years disclose a new scene. Within that space a crowd of dramatists arose whose writings still form a portion of our living poetry, and present the regular drama, no longer only painfully struggling into the outward shape proper to that kind of composition, but having the breath of life breathed into it, and beginning to throb and stir with the pulsations of genuine passion. We can here shortly notice only some of the chief names in this numerous company of our early dramatists, properly so called. Among the group of "University Wits" or professed men of letters is George Peele, the first of whose dramatic productions, *The Arraignment of Paris*, a sort of pastoral masque or pageant which had been represented before the queen, was printed anonymously in 1584. This is an elaborate compliment to Elizabeth, with passages of lively verse, and containing an exquisite lilting song. The *Old Wives' Tale* has also a quaint though incoherent chorus. But Peele's most celebrated drama is his *Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe*, first published in 1599, two or three years after the author's death. This play, though chaotic in plan, is penetrated with a lyrical note of emotion which often quickens the blank verse into soft melody. In the frequent effects of splendid imaginative surprise and in the intimate unions of cadence and imagery Lodge really brings us to the true Elizabethan rapture. Contemporary with Peele was Robert Greene, the author of five plays, besides one written in conjunction with a friend. Greene died in 1592, and he appears only to have begun to write for the stage about 1587. Greene has a turn for merriment, of which Peele in his dramatic productions shows little or nothing. His comedy, or farce rather, is no doubt usually coarse enough, but the turbid stream flows at least freely and abundantly. Among his plays is a curious one on the subject of the *History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which is supposed to have been written in 1588 or 1589, though first published in 1594. This, however, is not so much a story of *diablerie* as of mere legerdemain, mixed, like all the rest of Greene's pieces, with a good deal of farcical incident and dialogue; even the catastrophe, in which one of the characters is carried off to hell, being so managed as to impart no supernatural interest to the drama. Yet the heroine Margaret is very fresh and lovable; and the romantic interest of the play is undeniable.

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[1] *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, iii. 13.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Of a different and far higher order of poetical and dramatic character is another play of this date upon a similar subject, the *Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe died at an early age in 1593, the year after Greene, and three or four years before Peele. He had been a writer for the stage at least since 1586, in which year, or before, was brought out the play of *Tamburlaine the Great*. "Marlowe's mighty line" has been celebrated by Ben Jonson in his famous verses on Shakespeare; but Drayton, the author of the *Polyolbion*, has extolled him in words the most worthy of the theme:—

> Next Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunary things
> That the first poets had: his raptures were
> All air and fire, which made his verses clear:
> For that fine madness still he did retain,
> Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.[1]

Marlowe is, by nearly universal admission, our greatest dramatic writer before Shakespeare. He is frequently, indeed, turgid and bombastic, especially in his earliest play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, which has just been mentioned, where his fire, it must be confessed, sometimes blazes out of all bounds and becomes a mere wasting conflagration—sometimes raves in a furious storm of sound, filling the ear without any other effect. But in his fits of truer inspiration he is master of all the magic of terror, pathos, and beauty. The gradual accumulation of the agonies of *Faustus*, in the concluding scene of that play, as the moment of his awful fate comes nearer and nearer, powerfully drawn as it is, is not merely a crude attack on the sentiment of horror: the most admirable skill is applied throughout in balancing that emotion by sympathy and even respect for the sufferer—

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[1] Elegy, *To my dearly beloved friend Henry Reynolds, Of Poets and Poesy.*

> ——— for he was a scholar once admired
> For wondrous knowledge in our German schools,—

and yet without disturbing our acquiescence in the justice of his doom; till we close the book, saddened, indeed, but not dissatisfied, with the pitying but still tributary and almost consoling words of the Chorus on our hearts,—

> Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough
> That sometime grew within this learned man.

Still finer, perhaps, is the conclusion of another of Marlowe's dramas—his tragedy of *Edward II.* "The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward," says Charles Lamb, "furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his *Richard II.*; and the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted."[1] Much splendour of poetry, also, is expended upon the delineation of Barabas, in *The Rich Jew of Malta*; but Marlowe's Jew, as Lamb has observed, "does not approach so near to Shakespeare's [in the *Merchant of Venice*] as his Edward II." We are more reminded of some of Barabas's speeches by the magnificent declamation of Mammon in Jonson's *Alchymist*.

More chaotic are the *Massacre at Paris* and the *Tragedy of Dido*. Marlowe was also the author of a richly glowing version of the story of Hero and Leander, in heroic couplets; and his lyric power is expressed by the smooth song, *Come live with me and be my love*.

Marlowe was a superb poet, if an imperfect dramatist. Sheer imaginative vision, triumphant use of words, original and gorgeous music in the blank verse medium are incontestably all his. *Edward II.*, also, does show that Marlowe could master dramatic unity and had a powerful sense of psychology. A modern poet-critic declares of him: "He was the true Apollo of our dawn, the bright and morning star of the full midsummer day of English poetry at its highest."

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[1] *Spec. of Eng. Dram. Poets*, i. 31.

LYLY; KYD; LODGE

Marlowe, Greene, and Peele are the most noted names among those of our dramatists who belong exclusively to the age of Elizabeth; but some others that have less modern celebrity may perhaps be placed at least on the same line with the two latter. John Lyly, the Euphuist, as he is called, from one of his prose works, which will be noticed presently, is, as a poet, in his happiest efforts, elegant and fanciful; but his genius was better suited for the lighter kinds of lyric poetry than for the drama. He is the author of nine dramatic pieces, but of these seven are in prose, and only one in rhyme and one in blank verse. All of them were written for court entertainments, and were usually performed by the children of St. Paul's and the Revels. They were fitter, it might be added, for beguiling the listlessness of courts than for the entertainment of a popular audience, athirst for action and passion, and very indifferent to mere ingenuities of style. All poetical readers, however, remember some songs and other short pieces of verse with which some of them are interspersed, particularly a delicate little anacreontic in that entitled *Alexander and Campaspe*, beginning—

> Cupid and my Campaspe played
> At cards for kisses, &c.

Sappho and Phaon and *Endymion* are really graceful plays. The story in Lyly's dramas is always delicately told; and if the speech of the characters be Euphuistical and unreal, yet the exaggerated elegance of Lyly made for the refining ot contemporary comedy. Thomas Kyd, the author of the two plays of *Jeronimo* and the *Spanish Tragedy* (which is a continuation of the former), besides a translation of another piece from the French, appears to be called Sporting Kyd by Jonson, in his verses on Shakespeare, in allusion merely to his name. There is, at least, nothing particularly sportive in the little that has come down to us from his pen. Kyd was a considerable master of language; but his rank as a dramatist is not very easily settled, seeing that there is much doubt as to his claims to the authorship of by far the most striking passages in the *Spanish Tragedy*, the best of his two plays.[1] Lamb, quoting the scenes in question, describes them as "the very salt of the old play," which, without them, he adds, "is but a *caput*

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[1] This play, a popular stock piece, was often revised by other dramatists, once evidently by Jonson.

mortuum." It does not seem to be perfectly clear that the supposed contributions by another hand might not have been the work of Kyd himself. Lamb says, "There is nothing in the undoubted plays of Jonson which would authorize us to suppose that he could have supplied the scenes in question. I should suspect the agency of some 'more potent spirit.' Webster might have furnished them. They are full of that wild, solemn, preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in the *Duchess of Malfy.*" The last of these early dramatists we shall notice, Thomas Lodge, who was also an eminent physician, was born about 1556, and may have begun to write for the stage as early as 1580. His principal dramatic work is entitled *The Wounds of Civil War, lively set forth in the True Tragedies of Marius and Sylla*; and is written in blank verse with a mixture of rhyme. Another strange drama in rhyme, written by Lodge in conjunction with Greene, is entitled *A Looking-glass for London and England*, and has for its object to put down the puritanical outcry against the immorality of the stage, which it attempts to accomplish by a grotesque application to the city of London of the Scriptural story of Nineveh. Lodge, who had little dramatic sense, has left a considerable quantity of other poetry; and many of his lyrics are wonderful for honeyed sweetness and lucid cadence. He is also the author of several short works in prose, sometimes interspersed with verse. One of his prose tales, first printed in 1590, under the title of *Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacie*, found in his cell at Silextra (for Lodge was one of Lyly's imitators), is famous as the source from which Shakespeare appears to have taken the story of his *As You Like It.*

It is worthy of remark, that of these founders and first builders-up of the regular drama in England, nearly all were classical scholars and men who had received a university education. Nicholas Udall was of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; John Still (if he is to be considered the author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*) was of Christ's College, Cambridge; Sackville was educated at both universities; so was Gascoigne; Richard Edwards was of Corpus Christi, Oxford; Marlowe was of Benet College, Cambridge; Greene, of St. John's, Cambridge; Peele, of Christ Church, Oxford; Lyly, of Magdalen College, and Lodge of Trinity College, in the same university. Kyd was also probably a university man, though we know nothing o his private history. The diction of the works of all these dramatists betrays their scholarship; and they have left upon the language of our higher drama, and indeed of our blank verse in general, of which they were the main creators, an impress of resonant Latinity. Fortunately, however, the greatest and most influential of them were not mere men of books and readers of Greek and Latin. Greene and Peele and Marlowe all spent the noon of their days (none of them saw any afternoon) in the busiest haunts of social life, sounding in their reckless course all the depths of human experience, and drinking the cup of passion, and also of suffering, to the dregs. And of their great successors, those who carried the drama to its height in the next age, while some were also accomplished scholars, all were men of the world—men who knew their brother-men by an actual and intimate intercourse with them in their most natural and open-hearted moods, and over a wide range of conditions. We know, from even the scanty fragments of their history that have come down to us, that Shakespeare and Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher all lived much in the open air of society, and mingled with all ranks from the highest to the lowest; but we should have gathered, though no other record or tradition had told us, that they must have been men of this genuine and manifold experience from the drama which they have bequeathed to us,—various, rich, and glowing as that is, even as life itself.

EARLIER ELIZABETHAN PROSE.—LYLY; SIDNEY; GREENE; NASH

Before leaving the earlier part of the reign of Elizabeth, a few of the more remarkable writers in prose who had risen into notice before the year 1590 may be mentioned. The singular affectation known by the name of *Euphuism* was, like some other celebrated absurdities, the invention of a man of true genius—John Lyly, noticed above as a dramatist and poet—the first part of whose prose romance of *Euphues* appeared in 1578 or 1579. "Our nation," says Sir Henry Blount, in the preface to a collection of some of Lyly's dramatic pieces which he published in 1632, "are in his debt for a new English which he taught them. *Euphues and his England*[1] began first that language; all our ladies were then his scholars; and that beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism—that is to say, who was unable to converse in that pure and reformed English, which he had formed his work to be the standard of—was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French." Some notion of this "pure and reformed English" has been made familiar by the discourse of Sir Piercie Shafton, in the *Monastery*, which is rather an anachronistic caricature than a fair sample of Euphuism. Doubtless, it often became a purely silly affair in the mouths of the courtiers, but in Lyly's own writings, and in those of his lettered imitators, of whom he had several, it was merely fantastic and extravagant. Pedantic and far-fetched allusion, elaborate indirectness, a cloying smoothness and drowsy monotony of diction, alliteration, punning, and a tireless antithesis, together with an imagery that contains an entire system of natural history in solution,—these are the main ingredients of Euphuism; which do not, however, exclude a good deal of wit, fancy, and prettiness, both in the expression and the thought. Although Lyly, in his verse as well as in his prose, is always artificial to excess, his ingenuity and finished elegance are frequently very captivating. Perhaps, indeed, our language is, after all, indebted to this writer and his Euphuism for not a little of its present euphony. From the strictures Shakespeare, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, makes Holofernes pass on the mode of speaking of his Euphuist, Don Adriano de Armado —"a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight—that hath a mint of phrases in his brain—one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony"—it should almost seem that the now universally adopted pronunciation of many of our words was first introduced by such persons as this refining "child of fancy":—"I abhor such fanatical fantasms, such insociable and point-device companions; such rackers of orthography as to speak *dout*, fine, when he should say *doubt*; *det*, when he should pronounce *debt*, *d*, *e*, *b*, *t*; not *d*, *e*, *t*: he clepeth a *calf*, *cauf*; *half*, *hauf*; *neighbour* vocatur *nebour*; *neigh*, abbreviated *ne*; this is abhominable (which he would call *abominable*): it insinuateth me of insanie." Here, however, the all-seeing poet laughs rather at the pedantic schoolmaster than at the fantastic knight; and the euphuistic pronunciation which he makes Holofernes so indignantly criticize was most probably his own and that of the generality of his educated contemporaries. Lyly makes a real effort towards magnificence in prose style. He has great powers of fancy, and even his faults are courteous and refined in their quality.

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[1] This is the title of the second part of the *Euphues*, published in 1581. The first part is entitled *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit.*

A renowned English prose classic of this age, who made Lyly's affectations the subject of his ridicule some years before Shakespeare, but who also perhaps was not blind to his better qualities, and did not disdain to adopt some of his reforms in the language if not to imitate some of the peculiarities of his style, was Sir Philip Sidney, the illustrious author of the *Arcadia.* Sidney, who was born in 1554, does not appear to have sent anything to the press during his short and brilliant life, which was terminated by the wound he received at the battle of Zutphen, in 1586; but he was probably well known, nevertheless, at least as a writer of poetry, some years before his lamented death. Puttenham, whose *Art of English Poesy*, at whatever time it may have been written, was published before any work of Sidney's had been printed, so far as can now be discovered, mentions him as one of the best and most famous writers of the age "for eclogue and pastoral poesy." The *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, as Sidney's principal work had been affectionately designated by himself, in compliment to his sister, to whom it was inscribed—the "fair, and good, and learned" lady, afterwards celebrated by Ben Jonson as "the subject of all verse"—was not given to the world even in part till 1590, nor completely till 1593. His collection of sonnets and songs entitled *Astrophel and Stella* first appeared in 1591. This oddly mingled company of love-songs and sonnets contain many examples of mere fantastical conceit; but others are great achievements in penetrative passion, subtle psychology, and some are magnificent climaxes of proud emotion, while certain of the "variable songs" cannot be surpassed for their soaring splendour of effect. His other most celebrated piece in prose, *The Defence of Poesy*, provoked by an attack on the theatre by Stephen Gosson, came in 1595. The production in which he satirizes the affectation and pedantry of the modern corrupters of the vernacular tongue is a sort of masque, supposed to pass before Queen Elizabeth in Wanstead garden, in which, among other characters, a village schoolmaster called Rombus appears, and declaims in a jargon not unlike that of Shakespeare's Holofernes. Sidney's own prose is more fluent and brilliant than that of his predecessors, but its graces are rather those of elaboration than of a vivid natural expressiveness. Yet, notwithstanding the conceits into which it frequently runs—and which, after all, are mostly the frolics of a nimble wit,—and, notwithstanding also some want of animation and variety, Sidney's is a style, flexible, harmonious, and luminous, on fit occasions rising to great stateliness and splendour; while a breath of beauty and noble feeling exhales from the whole of his great work, like the fragrance from a garden of flowers.

Among the most active occasional writers in prose, also, about this time were others of the poets and dramatists of the day, besides Lodge, who has been already mentioned as one of Lyly's imitators. Greene was an incessant pamphleteer upon all sorts of subjects; the list of his prose publications, so far as they are known, given by Mr. Dyce extends to between thirty and forty articles, the earliest being dated 1584, or eight years before his death. Morality, fiction, satire, blackguardism, are all mingled together in the stream that thus appears to have flowed without pause from his ready pen. "In a night and a day," says his friend Nash, "would he have yarked up a pamphlet as well as in seven years; and glad was that printer that might be so blest to pay him dear for the very dregs of his wit."[1] His wit, indeed, often enough appears to have run to the dregs, nor is it very sparkling at the best; but Greene's prose, though not in general very animated, is more concise and perspicuous than his habits of composition might lead us to expect. Among his most curious pamphlets are his several tracts on the rogueries of London, which he describes under the name of Coney-catching—a favourite subject also with other popular writers of that day. But the most remarkable of all Greene's contributions to our literature are his various publications which either directly relate or are understood to shadow forth the history of his own wild and unhappy life—his tale entitled *Never too Late; or, A Powder of Experience*, 1590; the second part entitled *Francesco's Fortunes*, the same year; his *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, and *The Repentance of Robert Greene, Master of Arts*, which both appeared, after his death, in 1592. Greene, as well as Lodge, we may remark, is to be reckoned among the Euphuists; a tale which he published in 1587, and which was no less than five times reprinted in the course of the next half-century, is entitled *Menaphon; Camilla's Alarum to Slumbering Euphues, in his Melancholy Cell at Silexedra*, &c.; and the same year he produced *Euphues his Censure to Philantus*: wherein is presented a philosophical combat between Hector and Achilles, &c. But he does not appear to have persisted in this fashion of style. It may be noticed as curiously illustrating the spirit and manner of our fictitious literature at this time, that in his *Pandosto; or, History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, Greene, a scholar and a Master of Arts of Cambridge, does not hesitate to make Bohemia an island, just as is done by Shakespeare in treating the same story in his *Winter's Tale.* The critics have been accustomed to instance this as one of the evidences of Shakespeare's ignorance, and Ben Jonson is recorded to have, in his conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden, quoted it as a proof that his great brother-dramatist "wanted art,[1] and sometimes sense." The truth is, as has been observed,[2] such deviations from fact, and other incongruities of the same character, were not avoided, either in the romantic drama, or in the legends out of which it was formed. They are not blunders, but part and parcel of the fiction. The making Bohemia an island is not nearly so great a violation of geographical truth as other things in the same play are of all the proprieties and possibilities of chronology and history—for instance, the co-existence of a kingdom of Bohemia at all, or of that modern barbaric name, with anything so entirely belonging to the old classic world as the *Oracle of Delphi.* The story (though no earlier record of it has yet been discovered) is not improbably much older than either Shakespeare or Greene: the latter no doubt expanded and adorned it, and mainly gave it its present shape; but it is most likely that he had for his groundwork some rude popular legend or tradition, the characteristic middle age geography and chronology of which he most properly did not disturb.

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[1] *Strange News*, in answer to Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters*.

But the most brilliant pamphleteer of this age was Thomas Nash. Nash is the author of one slight dramatic piece, mostly in blank verse, but partly in prose, and having also some lyrical poetry interspersed, called *Summer's Last Will and Testament,* which was exhibited before Queen Elizabeth at Nonsuch in 1592; and he also assisted Marlowe in his *Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage,* which, although not printed till 1594, is supposed to have been written before 1590. But his satiric was of a much higher order than his dramatic talent. There never perhaps was poured forth such a rushing and roaring torrent of wit, ridicule, and invective, as in the rapid succession of pamphlets which he published in the course of the year 1589 against the Puritans and their famous champion (or rather knot of champions) taking the name of Martin Mar-Prelate; unless in those in which he began two years after to assail poor Gabriel Harvey, his persecution of and controversy with whom lasted a much longer time—till indeed the archbishop of Canterbury (Whitgift) interfered in 1597 to restore the peace of the realm by an order that all Harvey's and Nash's books should be taken wherever they might be found, "and that none of the said books be ever printed hereafter." Harvey, too, was a man of eminent talent; but it was of a kind very different from that of Nash. Nash's style is remarkable for its vigour and frankness; clear it of its old spelling, and, unless it be for a few words and idioms which have now dropped out of the popular speech, it has quite a modern air. Gabriel Harvey's mode of writing exhibits all the peculiarities of his age in their most exaggerated form. He was a great scholar—and his composition is inspired by the very genius of pedantry; full of matter, full often of good sense, not infrequently rising to a tone of dignity, and even eloquence, but always stiff, artificial, and elaborately unnatural to a degree which was even then unusual. We may conceive what sort of chance such a heavy-armed combatant, encumbered and oppressed by the very weapons he carried, would have in a war of wit with the quick, elastic, inexhaustible Nash, and the showering jokes and sarcasms that flashed from his easy, natural pen. Harvey, too, with all his merits, was both vain and envious; and he had some absurdities which afforded tempting game for satire. Some of the prose translators also helped to build up a most expressive if still quaint and extravagant prose. Adlington's *Apuleius* (1566), Underdowne's *Heliodorus* (1569), and North's *Plutarch* are famous examples of this kind of work.

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[1] Yet Jonson has elsewhere expressly commended Shakespeare for his art. See his well-known verse prefixed to the first folio edition of the Plays.

[2] See Notice on the Costume of the *Winter's Tale* in Knight's *Shakspere,* vol. iv.

EDMUND SPENSER

Edmund Spenser, probably born about 1562, has been supposed to have come before the world as a poet so early as the year 1569, when some sonnets translated from *Petrarch*, Joachim du Bellay, which long afterwards were reprinted with his name, appeared in Vander Noodt's *Theatre of Worldlings*: on the 20th of May in that year he was entered a sizar of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; and in that same year, also, an entry in the Books of the Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber records that there was "paid upon a bill signed by Mr. Secretary, dated at Windsor 18° Octobris, to Edmund Spenser, that brought letters to the Queen's Majesty from Sir Henry Norris, Knight her Majesty's ambassador in France, being at Thouars in the said realm, for his charges the sum of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, over and besides 9*l.* prested to him by Sir Henry Norris."[1] It has been supposed that this entry refers to the poet.

He has himself commemorated the place of his birth: "At length," he says in his *Prothalamion*, or poem on the marriages of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester,

> At length they all to merry London came,
> To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
> That to me gave this life's first native source,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> An house of ancient fame.

It is commonly said, on the authority of Oldys, that he was born in East Smithfield by the Tower. It appears from the register of the University that he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1573, and that of Master of Arts in 1576. His University friendships with Harvey and his circle greatly influenced him for some time. On leaving Cambridge he retired for some time to the north of England, where he had a love-passage with the lady known as Rosalind. Here he appears to have written the greater part of his *Shepherd's Calendar*, which, having previously come up to London, he published in 1579. In the beginning of August, 1580, on the appointment of Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton as Lord Deputy of Ireland, he accompanied his lordship to that country as his secretary; in March, the year following, he was appointed to the office of Clerk in the Irish Court of Chancery.

Of how he was employed for the next three or four years nothing is known; but in 1586 he obtained from the crown a grant of above 3000 acres of forfeited lands in Ireland: the grant is dated the 27th of July, and, if it was procured, as is not improbable, through Sir Philip Sidney, it was the last kindness of that friend and patron, whose death took place in October of this year. Spenser resided in what had been the earl's castle of Kilcolman, till he returned to England in 1589, and published at London, in 4to., the first three Books of his *Faërie Queene*. If he had published anything else since the *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared eleven years before, it could only have been a poem of between four and five hundred lines, entitled *Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly*, which he dedicated to the Lady Carey. He has himself related, in his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, how he had been visited in his exile by the Shepherd of the Ocean, by which designation he means Sir Walter Raleigh, and persuaded by him to make this visit to England for the purpose of having his poem printed. Raleigh introduced him to Elizabeth, to whom the *Faërie Queene* was dedicated, and who in February, 1591, bestowed on the author a pension of 50*l.* This great work immediately raised Spenser to such celebrity, that the publisher hastened to collect whatever of his other poems he could find, and, under the general title of *Complaints; Containing Sundry Small Poems of the World's Vanity*; printed together, in a 4to. volume, *The Ruins of Time*, *The Tears of the Muses*, *Virgil's Gnat*, *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, *The Ruins of Rome* (from the French of Bellay), *Muiopotmos* (which is stated to be the only one of the pieces that had previously appeared), and *The Visions of Petrarch*, &c. Many more, it is declared, which the author had written in former years were not to be found.

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[1] First published in Mr. Cunningham's Introduction (p. xxx) to his *Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court*, printed for the Shakespeare Society, 8vo., Lond. 1842.

Spenser appears to have remained in England till the beginning of the year 1592: his *Daphnaida*, an elegy on the death of Douglas Howard, daughter of Lord Howard, and wife of Arthur Gorges, Esq., is dedicated to the Marchioness of Northampton in an address dated the 1st of January in that year, and it was published soon after. He then returned to Ireland, and, probably in the course of 1592 and 1593, there composed the series of eighty-eight sonnets in which he relates his courtship of the lady whom he at last married, celebrating the event by a splendid Epithalamion. But it appears from the eightieth sonnet that he had already finished six Books of his *Faërie Queene.* His next publication was another 4to. volume, which appeared in 1595, containing his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, the dedication of which to Raleigh is dated "From my house at Kilcolman, December the 27th, 1591," no doubt a misprint for 1594; and also his *Astrophel*, an elegy upon Sir Philip Sidney, dedicated to his widow, now the Countess of Essex; together with *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis*, another poem on the same subject. The same year appeared, in 8vo., his sonnets, under the title of *Amoretti*, accompanied by the *Epithalamion.* In 1596 he paid another visit to England, bringing with him the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books of his *Faërie Queene*, which were published, along with a new edition of the preceding three books, in 4to., at London in that year. In the latter part of the same year appeared, in a volume of the same form, a reprint of his *Daphnaida*, together with his *Prothalamion*, or spousal verse on the marriages of the Ladies Elizabeth and Catharine Somerset, and his *Four Hymns* in honour of Love, of Beauty, of Heavenly Love, and of Heavenly Beauty, dedicated to the Countesses of Cumberland and Warwick, in an address dated Greenwich, the 1st of September, 1596. The first two of these Hymns he states had been composed in the greener times of his youth; and, although he had been moved by one of the two ladies to call in the same as, "having too much pleased those of like age and disposition, which, being too vehemently carried with that kind of affection, do rather suck out poison to their strong passion than honey to their honest delight," he "had been unable so to do, by reason that many copies thereof were formerly scattered abroad." At this time it was still common for literary compositions of all kinds to be extensively circulated in manuscript, as used to be the mode of publication before the invention of printing. These Hymns were the last of his productions that he sent to the press. It was during this visit to England that he presented to Elizabeth, and probably wrote, his prose treatise entitled *A View of the State of Ireland*, written dialogue-wise between Eudoxus and Irenaeus; but that work remained unprinted, till it was published at Dublin by Sir James Ware in 1633.

Spenser returned to Ireland probably early in 1597; and was the next year recommended by the Queen to be sheriff of Cork; but, soon after the breaking out of Tyrone's rebellion in October, 1598, his house of Kilcolman was attacked and burned by the rebels, and, one child having perished in the flames, it was with difficulty that he made his escape with his wife and two sons. He arrived in England in a state of destitution; but it seems unlikely that, with his talents and great reputation, his powerful friends, his pension, and the rights he still retained, although deprived of the enjoyment of his Irish property for the moment, he could have been left to perish, as has been commonly said, of want: the breaking up of his constitution was a natural consequence of the sufferings he had lately gone through. All that we know, however, is that, after having been ill for some time, he died at an inn in King Street, Westminster, on the 16th of January, 1599. Two Cantos, undoubtedly genuine, of a subsequent Book of the *Faërie Queene*, and two stanzas of a third Canto, entitled *Of Mutability* and forming part of the *Legend of Constancy*, were published in an edition of his collected works, in a folio volume, in 1609; and it may be doubted if much more of the poem was ever written.

The *Shepherd's Calendar* first announced Spenser's poetic greatness. Though consisting of twelve distinct poems denominated Æclogues, it is not only pastoral, in the ordinary acceptation, but in some measure a piece of polemical or party divinity. A good shepherd, such as Algrind, is the puritanical archbishop of Canterbury, Grindall. Another, represented in a much less favourable light, is Morell, that is, his famous antagonist, Elmore, or Aylmer, bishop of London. The puritanical spirit of some parts of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, probably contributed to the popularity which the poem long retained. It was reprinted four times during the author's lifetime, in 1581, 1586, 1591, and 1597. This earliest work of Spenser's betrays his study of our elder poetry as much by its diction as by other indications: he has thickly sprinkled it with words and phrases which were obsolete at the time when it was written. This he seems to have done, not so much that the antiquated style might give the dialogue an air of rusticity proper to the speech of shepherds, but rather in the Virgilian design, that his verse might thereby be the more distinguished from common discourse, that it might fall upon the ears of men with something of the impressiveness and authority of a voice from other times, and that it might seem to echo, and, as it were, continue and prolong, the strain of the old national minstrelsy; thus at once expressing his love and admiration of the preceding poets who had been his examples, making their compositions reflect additional light and beauty upon his own.

Executed in a firmer and more matured style, and, though with more regularity of manner, yet also with more true boldness and freedom, is the admirable *Prosopopoia*, as it is designated, of the adventures of the Fox and the Ape, or *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, notwithstanding that this, too, is stated to have been an early production—"long sithens composed," says the author in his dedication of it to the Lady Compton and Monteagle, "in the raw conceit of my youth." Perhaps, however, this was partly said to avert the offence that might be taken at the audacity of the satire. It has not much the appearance, either in manner or in matter, of the production of a very young writer. We should say that *Mother Hubberd's Tale* represents the middle age of Spenser's genius, if not of his life—the stage in his mental and poetical progress when his relish and power of the energetic had attained perfection, but the higher sense of the beautiful had not yet been fully developed. We shall certainly much mistake the character of Spenser if we suppose, from the romantic and unworldly strain of much—and that, doubtless, the best and highest—of his poetry, that he was anything resembling a mere dreamer. In the first place, the vast extent of his knowledge, and the fertility of his genius, sufficiently prove that his days were not spent in idleness. Then, even in the matter of securing a livelihood and a position in the world, want of activity or eagerness is a fault of which he can hardly be accused.

Mother Hubberd's Tale must have been written before he obtained the grant of Irish land. It is a sharp and shrewd satire upon the common modes of rising in the church and state; not at all passionate or declamatory,—on the contrary, pervaded by a spirit of quiet humour, which occasionally gives place to a tone of greater solemnity, and assuredly, with all its high-minded and even severe morality, evinces in the author anything rather than either ignorance of the world or indifference to the ordinary objects of human ambition. No one will rise from its perusal with the notion that Spenser was a mere rhyming visionary, or singing somnambulist. No; like every other great poet, he was an eminently wise man, exercised in every field of thought, and rich in all knowledge—above all, in knowledge of mankind. In this poem of *Mother Hubberd's Tale* we still find also both his puritanism and his imitation of Chaucer. Indeed, he has written nothing else so much in Chaucer's manner and spirit; nor have we nearly so true a reflection, or rather revival, of the Chaucerian narrative style—at once easy and natural, clear and direct, firm and economical, various and always spirited—in any other modern verse.

The *Faërie Queene* was designed by its author to be taken as an allegory—"a continued allegory, or dark conceit," as he calls it in his preliminary Letter to Raleigh "expounding his whole intention in the course of this work." Twelve knights, representing twelve virtues, are sent out on adventure from the Court of Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland. The poem contains six finished books: *The Legends of Holiness*, *Temperance*, *Chastity*, *Friendship*, *Justice*, *Courtesy*. A fragment on *Mutability* is supposed to have been intended for the seventh book on *Constancy*. The poem is a great *Roman d'Aventure*: the rencontres of the different knights and the interventions of Arthur give it some degree of unity. The allegory was certainly "dark" and involved to an unusual degree; for not only was the Fairy Queen, by whom the knights are sent forth upon their adventures, to be understood as meaning Glory in the general intention, but in a more particular sense she was to stand for "the most excellent and glorious person" of Queen Elizabeth; and some other eminent person of the day appears in like manner to have been shadowed forth in each of the other figures. The most interesting allegory that was ever written carries us along chiefly by making us forget that it is an allegory at all. The charm of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is that all the persons and all the places in it seem real—that Christian, and Evangelist, and Mr. Worldly Wiseman, and Mr. Greatheart, and the Giant Despair, and all the rest, are to our apprehension not shadows, but beings of flesh and blood; and the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, the Valley of Humiliation, and the Enchanted Ground, all so many actual scenes or localities which we have as we read before us or around us. In the same manner, whoever would enjoy the *Faërie Queene* as a poem must forget that it is an allegory, either single or double, either compound or simple. Nor in truth is it even much of a story. Neither the personages that move in it, nor the adventures they meet with, interest us much. One fortunate consequence of all this is, that the poem scarcely loses anything by the incompletion of the design of the author. What we have of it is not injured in any material respect by the want of the rest. This Spenser himself no doubt felt when he originally gave it to the world in successive portions; and it would not have mattered much although of the six books he had published the last three before the first three.

These peculiarities—the absence of an interesting story or concatenation of incidents, and the want of human character and passion in the personages that carry on the story, such as it is—are no defects in the *Faërie Queene.* On the contrary, the poetry is only left thereby so much the purer. Without calling Spenser the greatest of all poets, we may still say that his poetry is the most poetical of all poetry. Other poets are all of them something else as well as poets, and deal in reflection, or reasoning, or humour, or wit, almost as largely as in the proper product of the imaginative faculty; his strains alone, in the *Faërie Queene*, are poetry, all poetry, and nothing but poetry. It is vision unrolled after vision, to the sound of endless varying music. The "*shaping* spirit of imagination," considered apart from moral sensibility—from intensity of passion on the one hand, and grandeur of conception on the other—certainly never was possessed in the like degree by any other writer; nor has any other evinced a deeper feeling of all forms of the beautiful; nor have words ever been made by any other to embody thought with more wonderful art. On the one hand invention and fancy in the creation or conception of his thoughts; on the other the most exquisite sense of beauty, united with a command over all resources of language, in their vivid and musical expression—these are the great distinguishing characteristics of Spenser's poetry. What of passion is in it lies mostly in the melody of the verse; but that is often thrilling and subduing in the highest degree. Its moral tone, also, is very captivating; a soul of nobleness, gentle and tender as the spirit of its own chivalry, modulates every cadence.

Spenser's extraordinary faculty of vision-seeing and picture-drawing can fail to strike none of his readers; but he will not be adequately appreciated or enjoyed by those who regard verse either as a non-essential or as a very subordinate element of poetry, for the peculiar charm of the stanza of his invention, reminiscent as it may have been of the ottava rima and the sonnet, is intimately concerned with the dreamy beauty of his masterpiece. Such minds, however, must miss half the charm of all poetry. Not only all that is purely sensuous in poetry must escape them, but likewise all the pleasurable excitement that lies in the harmonious accordance of the musical expression with the informing idea or feeling. All beauty is dependent upon form; other things may often enter into the beautiful, but this is the one thing that can never be dispensed with. Accordingly, whatever addresses itself to the imagination takes this character: it falls into more or less of regularity and measure. Mere passion is of all things the most unmeasured and irregular, naturally the most opposed of all things to form. But in that state it is also wholly unfitted for the purposes of art; before it can become imaginative in any artistic sense it must have put off its original merely volcanic character, and worn itself into something of measure and music. Thus all impassioned composition is essentially melodious, in a higher or lower degree; measured language is the appropriate and natural expression of passion or deep feeling operating artistically in writing or speech. The highest and most perfect kind of measured language is verse; and passion expressing itself in verse is what is properly called poetry. The verse, in truth, is only one of several things by the aid of which the passion seeks to give itself effective expression, or by which the thought is endowed with additional animation or beauty; nay, it is only one ingredient of the *musical* expression of the thought or passion. If the verse may be dispensed with, so likewise upon the same principle may every decoration of the sentiment or statement, everything else that would do more than convey the bare fact. Those who dispute this will never be able to prove more than that their own enjoyment of the sensuous part of poetry, which is really that in which its peculiar character resides, is limited or feeble; as it may very well be in minds otherwise highly gifted, and even endowed with considerable imaginative power. The feeling of the merely beautiful, however, or of beauty unimpregnated by something of a moral spirit or meaning, is not likely in such minds to be very deep or strong. High art, therefore, is not their proper region, in any of its departments. In poetry they will probably not very greatly admire or enjoy either Spenser or Milton—and perhaps would prefer *Paradise Lost* in the prose version which Osborne the bookseller got a gentleman of Oxford to execute for the use of readers to whom the sense was rather obscured by the verse.

Passing over several of the great passages towards the commencement of the poem—such as the description of Queen Lucifera and her Six Counsellors in the Fourth Canto of the First Book, that of the visit of the Witch Duessa to Hell in the Fifth, and that of the Cave of Despair in the Ninth—which are probably more familiarly known to the generality of readers, we will take as a specimen of the *Faërie Queene* the escape of the Enchanter Archimage from Bragadocci and his man Trompart, and the introduction and description of Belphoebe, in the Third Canto of Book Second—

He stayed not for more bidding, but away
Was sudden vanished out of his sight:
The northern wind his wings did broad display
At his command, and reared him up light,
From off the earth to take his airy flight.
They looked about, but nowhere could espy
Tract of his foot; then dead through great affright
They both nigh were, and each bade other fly;
Both fled at once, ne ever back returned eye;

Till that they come unto a forest green,
In which they shrowd themselves from causeless fear;
Yet fear them follows still, whereso they been;
Each trembling leaf and whistling wind they hear

As ghastly bug[1] does greatly them afear;
Yet both do strive their fearfulness to feign.[2]
At last they heard a horn, that shrilled clear
Throughout the wood, that echoed again,
And made the forest ring, as it would rive in twain.

Eft[3] through the thick they heard one rudely rush,
With noise whereof he from his lofty steed
Down fell to ground, and crept into a bush,
To hide his coward head from dying dreed;
But Trompart stoutly stayed, to taken heed
Of what might hap. Eftsoon there stepped foorth
A goodly lady clad in hunter's weed,
That seemed to be a woman of great worth,
And by her stately portance[4] born of heavenly birth.

Her face so fair as flesh it seemed not,
But heavenly pourtrait of bright angels' hue,
Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexions due;
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew,
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
The which ambrosial odours from them threw,
And gazers' sense with double pleasure fed,
Able to heal the sick, and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,
Kindled above at the heavenly Maker's light,
And darted fiery beams out of the same,
So passing persant and so wondrous bright
That quite bereaved the rash beholder's sight:
In them the blinded god his lustful fire
To kindle oft assayed, but had no might;
For with dread majesty and awful ire
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread
For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
And write the battles of his great godhead:
All good and honour might therein be read,
For there their dwelling was; and when she spake,
Sweet words like dropping honey she did shed,
And twixt the pearls and rubins[5] softly brake
A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make.

Upon her eyelids many graces sate,
Under the shadow of her even brows,
Working belgardes[6] and amorous retrate;[7]
And every one her with a grace endows,
And every one with meekness to her bows:
So glorious mirror of celestial grace,
And sovereign moniment of mortal vows,
How shall frail pen descrive[8] her heavenly face,
For fear through want of skill her beauty to disgrace?

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[1] Bugbear.
[2] Conceal.
[3] Soon.
[4] Carriage.
[5] Rubies.
[6] Beautiful looks.
[7] Aspect.
[8] Describe.

So fair, and thousand thousand times more fair,
She seemed, when she presented was to sight;
And was yclad, for heat of scorching air,
All in a silken camus[1] lily white,
Purfled[2] upon with many a folded plight,[3]
Which all above besprinkled was throughout
With golden aigulets, that glistened bright,
Like twinkling stars; and all the skirt about
Was hemmed with golden fringe.

Below her ham her weed[4] did somewhat train;[5]
And her straight legs most bravely were embailed[6]
In gilden[7] buskins of costly cordwain,[8]
All barred with golden bends, which were entailed[9]
With curious anticks,[10] and full fair aumailed;[11]
Before they fastened were under her knee
In a rich jewel, and therein entrailed[12]
The ends of all the knots, that none might see
How they within their foldings close enwrapped be.

Like two fair marble pillars they were seen,
Which do the temple of the gods support,
Whom all the people deck with girlonds[13] green,
And honour in their festival resort;
Those same with stately grace and princely port
She taught to tread, when she herself would grace;
But with the woody nymphs when she did sport,
Or when the flying libbard[14] she did chase,
She could them nimbly move, and after fly apace.

And in her hand a sharp boar-spear she held,
And at her back a bow and quiver gay
Stuffed with steel-headed darts, wherewith she quelled
The salvage beasts in her victorious play,
Knit with a golden baldric, which forelay
Athwart her snowy breast, and did divide
Her dainty paps; which, like young fruit in May,
Now little, gan to swell, and, being tied,
Through her thin weed their places only signified.

Her yellow locks, crisped like golden wire,
About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
And, when the wind amongst them did inspire,
They waved like a penon wide dispread,
And low behind her back were scattered;
And, whether art it were or heedless hap,
As through the flowering forest rash she fled,
In her rude hairs sweet flowers themselves did lap,
And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did enwrap.

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[1] Thin gown. [2] Gathered. [3] Plait. [4] Dress.
[5] Hang. [6] Enclosed. [7] Gilded. [8] Spanish leather.
[9] Engraved, marked. [10] Figures. [11] Enamelled.
[12] Interwoven. [13] Garlands. [14] Leopard.

Such as Diana, by the sandy shore
Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus green,
Where all the nymphs have her unwares forlore,[1]
Wandereth alone, with bow and arrows keen,
To seek her game; or as that famous queen
Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy,
The day that first of Priam she was seen
Did show herself in great triumphant joy
To succour the weak state of sad afflicted Troy.

OTHER ELIZABETHAN POETRY

In the six or seven years from 1590 to 1596, what a world of wealth had thus been added to our poetry by Spenser alone! But England was now a land of song, and the busiest age of our poetical literature had fairly commenced. What are commonly called the minor poets of the Elizabethan age are to be counted by hundreds, and few of them are altogether without merit. If they have nothing else, the least gifted of them have at least something of the freshness and airiness of that balmy morn, some tones caught from their greater contemporaries, some echoes of the spirit of music that then filled the universal air. The new fashion for chamber-music, demanding brief and airy lyrics for lute-melodies blent charmingly with the prevailing lyricism. Mr. Bullen's recent delightful anthologies of Elizabethan verse have been enriched from the *Books of Airs* of men like William Byrd, John Dowland, Philip Rosseter, Robert Jones, and Orlando Gibbons. Elizabethan song is thrilled with a wonderful zest and spontaneity: if these qualities are sometimes curiously combined with a fantastical ingenuity in conceits, these conceits are not the wearied inventions of exhaustion but the diversions of minds charged with an excess of energy.

The anthologies known as *England's Helicon*, and *A Handful of Pleasant Delites*, contain many of the loveliest songs. They are scattered broadcast however, in drama, romance, and song-book. Nicholas Breton, Richard Barnfield, Father Southwell, author of the *Burning Babe*, Sir Walter Raleigh, with his slender store of mournful and haughty verse, Lord Oxford, and Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, with his curious poetry, "all frozen and made rigid with intellect," are among the singers of the time, but many of the most charming lyrics are anonymous.

Thomas Campion, physician, musician, and poet, born in 1567, is one of the most exquisite lyrists. He wrote for his own music, and also for the airs of others, verses of wonderful singing quality, and a half-classic, half-romantic sweetness of imagination which has a most compelling enchantment. Mr. Bullen says of Campion, " He holds among Elizabethan song-writers the place that is held by Meleager in the Greek anthology. For tenderness and for depth of feeling, for happiness of phrase and for chaste artistic perfection he is supreme."

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[1] Forsaken.

The sonnet-sequence also now becomes a tyrannical fashion, the result of Petrarch-worship. The three great sonneteers, of course, are Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare. But such sequences of sonnets, or mingled sonnets and lyrics as Fletcher's *Licia*, Lodge's *Phillis*, Constable's *Diana*, Drayton's *Idea*, Daniel's *Delia*, Griffin's *Fidessa*, and Watson's curious *Hecatompathia*, in which he works out his sequence with ostentatious artifice, are distinguished and interesting examples of this special development of Elizabethan verse.

WARNER

Among the more long-breathed poets is William Warner, supposed to have been born about the year 1558; he died in 1609. He has told us himself (in his Eleventh Book, chapter 62), that his birthplace was London, and that his father was one of those who sailed with Chancellor to Muscovy, in 1555: this, he says, was before he himself was born. Warner's own profession was the not particularly poetical one of an attorney of the Common Pleas. According to Anthony Wood, who makes him to have been a Warwickshire man, he had before 1586 written several pieces of verse, "whereby his name was cried up among the minor poets"; but this is probably a mistake; none of this early poetry imputed to Warner is now known to exist; and in the Preface to his *Albion's England*, he seems to intimate that that was his first performance in verse. In the Dedication to his poem he explains the meaning of the title, which is not very obvious: "This our whole island," he observes, "anciently called Britain, but more anciently Albion, presently containing two kingdoms, England and Scotland, is cause (right honourable) that, to distinguish the former, whose only occurents [occurrences] I abridge from our history, I entitle this my book *Albion's England*." *Albion's England* first appeared in thirteen Books, in 1586: and was reprinted in 1589, in 1592, in 1596, in 1597, and in 1602. In 1606 the author added a Continuance, or continuation, in three Books: and the whole work was republished (without, however, the last three Books having been actually reprinted) in 1612.

Albion's England is undoubtedly a work of very remarkable talent of its kind. It is in form a history of England, or Southern Britain, from the Deluge to the reign of James I., but may fairly be said to be, as the title-page of the last edition describes it, "not barren in variety of inventive intermixtures." Or, to use the author's own words in his Preface, he certainly, as he hopes, has no great occasion to fear that he has grossly failed "in verity, brevity, invention, and variety, profitable, pathetical, pithy, and pleasant." In fact, it is a very lively and amusing poem. Every striking event or legend that the old chronicles afford is seized and related always clearly, often with considerable spirit and animation. But it is far from being a mere compilation; a large proportion of the matter is Warner's own, in every sense of the word. In this, as well as in other respects, it has greatly the advantage over *The Mirror for Magistrates*, as a rival to which work it was perhaps originally produced, and with the popularity of which it could scarcely fail to interfere. What Warner was chiefly admired for in his own day was his style. Meres in his *Wit's Treasury* describes him not very judiciously as one of those by whom the English tongue in that age had been "mightily enriched, and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments." And for fluency, combined with precision and economy of diction, Warner is certainly remarkable. The book is also in the highest degree curious both as a repository of our old language, and for many notices of the manners and customs of our ancestors which are scattered up and down in it. All that is commonly known of Warner is from the story of Argentile and Curan, which has been frequently reprinted.

There are occasionally touches of true pathos in Warner, and his love of brevity generally prevents him from spoiling any stroke of this kind by multiplying words and images with the view of heightening the effect. His picture of Fair Rosamond in the hands of Queen Eleanor is touching:—

Fair Rosamund, surprised thus ere she did expect,
Fell on her humble knees, and did her fearful hands erect:
She blushed out beauty, whilst the tears did wash her pleasing face,
And begged pardon, meriting no less of common grace.
So far, forsooth, as in me lay, I did, quoth she, withstand;
But what may not so great a king by means or force command?
And dar'st thou, minion, quoth the Queen, thus article to me?

. . . . . .

With that she dashed her on the lips, so dyed double red:
Hard was the heart that gave the blow; soft were those lips that bled.

DANIEL

The great work of Samuel Daniel, who was born at Taunton, in Somersetshire, in 1562, and died in 1619, is his *Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York*, in eight Books, the first four published in 1595, the fifth in 1599, the sixth in 1602, the two last in 1609; the preceding Books being always, we believe, republished along with the new edition. He is also the author of various minor poetical productions, of which the principal are a collection of fifty-seven Sonnets entitled *Delia*, his *Musophilus*, containing a General Defence of Learning, some short epistles, and several tragedies and court masques, among these last the beautiful *Hymen's Triumph*. And he wrote, besides, in prose, a *History of England*, from the Conquest to the end of the reign of Edward III., as well as an admirably written *Defence of Rhyme*. Very opposite judgments have been passed upon Daniel. Ben Jonson, in his conversations with Drummond, declared him to be no poet: Drummond, on the contrary, pronounces him "for sweetness of rhyming second to none." His style, both in prose and verse, has a remarkably modern air. His verse, always careful and exact, is in many passages more than smooth; even in his dramatic writings it is frequently musical and sweet, though always artificial. The highest quality of his poetry is a tone of quiet, pensive reflection which often rises to dignity and eloquence, and has at times even something of depth and originality. Towards the end of his life he retired to a farm which he had at Beckington, near Philip's Norton, in Somersetshire, and his death took place there. "He was married," says the editor of his works, "but whether to the person he so often celebrates under the name of Delia, is uncertain." Fuller, in his Worthies, tells us that his wife's name was Justina. They had no children. Daniel is said to have been appointed to the honorary post of Poet Laureate after the death of Spenser.

In his narrative poetry, Daniel is dignified but languid. He has no passion, and very little descriptive power. His *Civil Wars* has certainly as little of martial animation in it as any poem in the language. There is abundance indeed of "the tranquil mind"; but of "the plumed troops," and the rest of "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," Daniel seems, in composing this work (we had nearly written in this composing work) to have taken as complete a farewell as

Othello himself. He, however, never loses command of a singularly pure and stately kind of English.

In the *Epistle to the Lady Margaret Countess of Cumberland* (mother of Lady Anne Clifford, afterwards Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery, to whom Daniel had been tutor), we have some of his most remarkable stanzas, as, for instance, the stanza ending with the striking exclamation—

> —— Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

DRAYTON

Michael Drayton, who is computed to have been born in 1563, and who died in 1631, is one of the most voluminous of our poets; being the author of three works of great length:—his *Barons' Wars* (on the subject of the civil wars of the reign of Edward II.), originally entitled *Mortimeriados*, under which name it was published in 1596; his *England's Heroical Epistles*, 1598; and his *Polyolbion*, the first eighteen Books of which appeared in 1612, and the whole, consisting of thirty Books, and extending to as many thousand lines, in 1622. This last is the work on which his fame principally rests. It is a most elaborate and minute topographical description of England, written in Alexandrine rhymes; and is a very remarkable work for the varied learning it displays, as well as for its poetic merits. The genius of Drayton is neither very imaginative nor very pathetic; but he is an agreeable and weighty writer, with an ardent, if not a highly creative, fancy. From the height to which he occasionally ascends, as well as from his power of keeping longer on the wing, he must be ranked, as he always has been, much before both Warner and Daniel.

The following is from the commencement of the Thirteenth Book, or Song, of the *Polyolbion*, the subject of which is the County of Warwick, of which Drayton, as he here tells us, was a native:—

> When Phœbus lifts his head out of the water's[1] wave,
> No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,
> At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring
> But Hunt's up to the morn the feathered sylvans sing;
> And, in the lower grove as on the rising knowl,
> Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole
> These quiristers are perched, with many a speckled breast:
> Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East

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[1] Or, perhaps, "watery." The common text gives "winter's."

Gilds every mountain-top, which late the humorous night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning's sight;
On which the mirthful quires, with their clear open throats,
Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes
That hills and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
Seems all composed of sounds about them every where.
The throstle with shrill sharps, as purposely he song
To awake the lustless sun, or chiding that so long
He was in coming forth that should the thickets thrill:
The woosel near at hand; that hath a golden bill,
As nature him had marked of purpose t' let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be:
For with their vocal sounds they sing to pleasant May;
Upon his dulcet pipe the merle doth only play.
When in the lower brake the nightingale hard by
In such lamenting strains the joyful hours doth ply
As though the other birds she to her tunes would draw
And, but that Nature, by her all-constraining law,
Each bird to her own kind this season doth invite,
They else, alone to hear that charmer of the night
(The more to use their ears) their voices sure would spare,
That moduleth her notes so admirably rare
As man to set in parts at first had learned of her.
To Philomel the next the linnet we prefer;
And by that warbling the bird woodlark place we then,
The red-sparrow, the nope, the redbreast, and the wren;
The yellow-pate, which, though she hurt the blooming tree,
Yet scarce hath any bird a finer pipe than she.
And, of these chanting fowls, the goldfinch not behind,
That hath so many sorts descending from her kind.
The tydy, for her notes as delicate as they;
The laughing hecco; then, the counterfeiting jay.
The softer with the shrill, some hid among the leaves,
Some in the taller trees, some in the lower greaves,
Thus sing away the morn, until the mounting sun
Through thick exhaled fogs his golden head hath run,
And through the twisted tops of our close covert creeps
To kiss the gentle shade, this while that sweetly sleeps.

We add a short specimen of Drayton's lighter style from his wonderfully gay and fanciful *Nymphidia*—the account of the equipage of the Queen of the Fairies, when she set out to visit her lover Pigwiggen. The reader may compare it with Mercutio's description in *Romeo and Juliet*:—

Her chariot ready straight is made;
Each thing therein is fitting laid,
That she by nothing might be stayed,
   For nought must be her letting;
Four nimble guests the horses were,
Their harnesses of gossamer,
Fly Cranion, her charioteer,
   Upon the coach-box getting.

Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
Which for the colours did excel,
The fair Queen Mab becoming well,
  So lively was the limning;
The seat the soft wool of the bee,
The cover (gallantly to see)
The wing of a pied butterflee;
  I trow 'twas simple trimming.

The wheels composed of cricket's bones,
And daintily made for the nonce;
For fear of rattling on the stones
  With thistle down they shod it;
For all her maidens much did fear
If Oberon had chanced to hear
That Mab his queen should have been there,
  He would not have abode it.

She mounts her chariot with a trice,
Nor would she stay for no advice
Until her maids, that were so nice,
  To wait on her were fitted;
But ran herself away alone;
Which when they heard, there was not one
But hasted after to be gone,
  As she had been diswitted.

Hop, and Mop, and Drab so clear,
Pip and Trip, and Skip, that were
To Mab their sovereign so dear,
  Her special maids of honour;
Fib, and Tib, and Pink, and Pin,
Tick, and Quick, and Jill, and Jin,
Tit, and Nit, and Wap, and Win,
  The train that wait upon her.

Upon a grasshopper they got,
And, what with amble and with trot,
For hedge nor ditch they spared not,
  But after her they hie them:
A cobweb over them they throw,
To shield the wind if it should blow;
Themselves they wisely could bestow
  Lest any should espy them.

The splendid *Ballad of Agincourt* is one of Drayton's climaxes; but his highest achievement in pure poetry is the great sonnet *Since there's no help*.

JOSEPH HALL

Joseph Hall was born in 1574, and was successively bishop of Exeter and Norwich, from the latter of which sees having been expelled by the Long Parliament, he died, after protracted sufferings from imprisonment and poverty, in 1656. Hall began his career of authorship by the publication of Three Books of *Satires*, in 1597, while he was a student at Cambridge, and only in his twenty-third year. A continuation followed the next year under the title of *Virgidemiarum the Three last Books*; and the whole was afterwards republished together, as *Virgidemiarum Six Books*; that is, six books of bundles of rods. Hall's violent diatribes sound insincere; but they have much literary finish, and the metre is energetic. Other prominent satirists were Lodge, Donne, and Marston.

SYLVESTER

One of the most popular poets of this date was Joshua Sylvester, the translator of the *Divine Weeks and Works*, and other productions, of the French poet Du Bartas. In one of his publications he styles himself a Merchant-Adventurer, and he seems to have belonged to the Puritan party, which may have had some share in influencing Milton's regard. His translation of *Du Bartas* was first published in 1605; and the seventh edition (beyond which, we believe, its popularity did not carry it) appeared in 1641. Nothing can be more uninspired than the general run of Joshua's verse, or more fantastic and absurd than the greater number of its more ambitious passages; for he had no taste or judgment. His poetry consists chiefly of translations from the French; but he is also the author of some original pieces, the title of one of which, a courtly offering from the poetical Puritan to the prejudices of King James, may be quoted as a lively specimen of his style and genius:—"Tobacco battered, and the pipes shattered, about their ears that idly idolize so base and barbarous a weed, or at leastwise overlove so loathsome a vanity, by a volley of holy shot thundered from Mount Helicon."[1] But, with all his general flatness and frequent absurdity, Sylvester has often a flow of harmonious words, and occasionally even some imaginative moments. His contemporaries called him the "Silver-tongued Sylvester," for what they considered the sweetness of his versification—and some of his best passages justify the title. The commencement of the following passage from his translation of *Du Bartas* may remind the reader of Milton's "Hail, holy light! offspring of heaven first-born":—

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[1] 8vo. Lond. 1615.

All hail, pure lamp, bright, sacred, and excelling ;
Sorrow and care, darkness and dread repelling ;
Thou world's great taper, wicked men's just terror,
Mother of truth, true beauty's only mirror,
God's eldest daughter ; O ! how thou art full
Of grace and goodness ! O ! how beautiful !

Among other eminent translators we may mention Sir John Harington's *Orlando Furioso* (1591), Fairfax, *Tasso*, Sir Richard Fanshawe's *Lusiad of Camoëns*, and the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini. But the most famous is

Chapman's 'Homer'

George Chapman was born at Hitching Hill, in the county of Hertford, in 1557, and lived till 1634. Besides his plays, which will be afterwards noticed, he is the author of several original poetical pieces ; but he is best known by his versions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. "He would have made a great epic poet," Charles Lamb has said, in his *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*, turning to these works after having characterized his dramas, "if, indeed, he has not abundantly shown himself to be one : for his *Homer* is not so properly a translation as the stories of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* re-written. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of mere modern translations. His almost Greek zeal for the honour of his heroes is only paralleled by that fierce spirit of Hebrew bigotry with which Milton, as if personating one of the zealots of the old law, clothed himself when he sat down to paint the acts of Samson against the uncircumcised. The great obstacle to Chapman's translations being read is their unconquerable quaintness. He pours out in the same breath the most just and natural, and the most violent and forced expressions. He seems to grasp whatever words come first to hand during the impetus of inspiration, as if all other must be inadequate to the divine meaning. But passion (the all in all in poetry) is everywhere present, raising the low, dignifying the mean, and putting sense into the absurd. He makes his readers glow, weep, tremble, take any affection which he pleases, be moved by words or in spite of them, be disgusted and overcome that disgust." Chapman's *Homer* is, in some respects, not unworthy of this enthusiastic tribute. Few writers have been more inspired with the genuine frenzy of poetry. In spite of a hurry and impetuosity which betray him into many mistranslations, and give a somewhat too tumultuous and stormy representation of the Homeric poetry, the English into which Chapman transfuses the meaning of the mighty ancient is often singularly and delicately beautiful. He is the author of nearly all the happiest of the compound epithets which Pope adopted, and of many others equally musical and expressive. "Far-shooting Phœbus,"—"the ever-living gods,"—"the many-headed hill,"—"the ivory-wristed queen"—are a few of the felicitous combinations with which he has enriched his native tongue. Carelessly executed, indeed, as the work for the most part is, there is scarcely a page of it that is not made remarkable by the "proud full sail of his great verse." Often in the midst of a long paragraph of the most chaotic versification, the fatigued and distressed ear is surprised by a few lines,—or it may be sometimes only a single line,—"musical as is Apollo's lute,"—sweet and graceful enough to compensate for ten times as much ruggedness. Other poems of Chapman are the obscure *Shadow of Night*, a translation of Ovid's *Banquet of Sense*, and a completion of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.

His sinewy and energetic plays include an interesting series with subjects drawn from French history such as *Bussy d'Ambois*, *Biron's Conspiracy*, and the *Tragedy of Philip Chabot, Admiral of France*. His best comedies are *The Gentleman Usher* and *Monsieur d'Olive*. He has plenty of energy and learning as a dramatist, but no sweetness or subtlety, and no lyric gift.

DRUMMOND (1585–1649)

One of the most graceful poetical writers of the reign of James I. is William Drummond, of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh; where Ben Jonson made him that famous visit of which his host left an account in MS. He has left us a quantity of prose as well as verse; the latter, in manner and spirit formed upon the model of Surrey, or rather upon that of Petrarch and the other Italian poets whom Surrey and many of his English successors imitated. No early English imitator of the Italian poetry, however, has excelled Drummond, either in the sustained melody of his verse, or its rich vein of thoughtful tenderness. Drummond had an impressionable and reminiscent kind of talent; and followed all the literary fashions. His sonnets are often mere paraphrases of English and Italian models. He was a writer of elegies, like his *Elegy on Prince Henry*. He wrote a group of devotional poems called *Flowers of Sion*. His prose meditations in the *Cypress*

Grove are of a pensive charm, and have some slight flavour of Sir Thomas Browne.

With Drummond might be mentioned his friend Sir William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling (1567–1640), the author of a sonnet-sequence called *Aurora*.

DAVIES

A remarkable poem of this age, first published in 1599, is the *Nosce Teipsum* of Sir John Davies, who was successively solicitor- and attorney-general in the reign of James, and had been appointed to the place of Chief Justice of the King's Bench, when he died, before he could enter upon its duties, in 1626. Davies' philosophical poem is written in rhyme, in the common heroic ten-syllable verse, but disposed in quatrains. Davies, however, has wonderfully conquered its difficulties; and, as has been observed, "perhaps no language can produce a poem, extending to so great a length, of more condensation of thought, or in which fewer languid verses will be found."[1] In fact, it is by this condensation and sententious brevity, so carefully filed and elaborated, however, as to involve no sacrifice of perspicuity or fulness of expression, that he has attained his end. Every quatrain is a pointed expression of a separate thought, like one of Rochefoucault's Maxims. The *Orchestra* is a more famous poem, in a beautiful stanza; but some of Davies' best verse is found in the set of acoustics called *Astræa*.

DONNE (1573–1631)

The title of the Metaphysical School of poetry, which in one sense of the words might have been given to Davies and his imitators, has been conferred by Dryden upon another race of writers, whose founder was a contemporary of Davies, the famous Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. Donne, who died at the age of fifty-eight, in 1631, is said to have written most of his poetry before the end of the sixteenth century, but none of it was published till late in the reign of James. It consists of lyrical pieces (entitled *Songs and Sonnets*), epithalamions or marriage songs, funeral and other elegies, satires, epistles, and divine poems. His curious poem *The Progress of the Soul* and his long elegy *The Anatomy of the World* deserve to be named. Much of Donne's poetry is involved and elaborate; conceit follows conceit without intermission; the most remote analogies, the most far-fetched images, the most unexpected turns, one after another, surprise and often puzzle the understanding; while things of the most opposite kinds—the harsh and the harmonious, the graceful and the grotesque, the grave and the gay, the pious and the profane—meet and mingle in the strangest of dances. But, through all this bewilderment, a deeper insight detects not only a vein of the most subtle wit, but often the most delicate fancy, and the truest passion. Donne, in the latter part of his life became a very serious and devout poet as well as man. His later poetry shows the same abundance and originality of thought, often running into a similar wildness and extravagance. Pope has given us a translation of his four *Satires* into modern language, which he calls *The Satires of Dr. Donne Versified.* At all events, whatever irregularity may be detected in them, if they be tested by Pope's narrow gamut, it is clearly not to be imputed to any immaturity in the language. These writers evidently preferred and cultivated, deliberately and on principle, a wider compass, and freer and more varied flow, of melody than Pope had a taste or an ear for. Nor can it be questioned, we think, that the peculiar construction of Donne's verse in his satires and many of his other later poems was also adopted by choice and on system. His lines, though they will not suit the see-saw style of reading verse—to which he probably intended that they should be invincibly impracticable,—are not without a deep and subtle music of their own, in which the cadences respond to the sentiment, when enunciated with a true feeling of all that they convey. They are not smooth or luscious verses, certainly; perhaps the endeavour to raise them to as vigorous and impressive a tone as possible, by depriving them of all over-sweetness or liquidity, has been carried too far; but we cannot doubt that whatever harshness they have was designedly given to them, and was conceived to infuse into them an essential part of their relish. When Jonson pronounced Donne "the first poet of the world in some things," he did not exaggerate. With all his perversity of style and all his deliberate experimentation in metre he combined an imaginative rapture, a complicated passion which make lyrics like *The Anniversary*, *The Relic*, *The Ecstasy*, *The Bracelet* and *The Funeral* as startlingly beautiful as anything in literature. He prophesies much that is most rare in entirely modern emotional work, although he had the true Renaissance qualities curiously wrought in with the casuistry of the schoolman.

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[1] Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.*, ii. 227.

Here is one of Donne's Songs:—

Sweetest love, I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;
But, since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest
By feigned death to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way:
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power!
That, of good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall;
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length
Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st thou sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.
It cannot be
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
Which art the life of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfil;
But think that we
Are but laid aside to sleep:
They who one another keep
Alive ne'er parted be.

Somewhat fantastic as this may be thought, it is surely, notwithstanding, full of feeling; and nothing can be more delicate than the execution. Nor is it possible that the writer of such verses can have wanted an ear for melody, howeve capriciously he may have sometimes experimented upon language, in the effort, as we conceive, to bring a deeper, more expressive music out of it than it would readily yield.

SHAKESPEARE'S MINOR POEMS

Shakespeare first enters the field by way of lyric and narrative poetry. He published his *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and his *Tarquin and Lucrece* in 1594; the *Sonnets* did not follow till 1609. It is probable that the earliest of these, which he calls the first heir of his invention, was written some years before its publication; and, although the *Tarquin and Lucrece* may have been published immediately after it was composed, it, too, may be accounted an early production. But, although this minor poetry of Shakespeare sounds throughout like the utterance of that spirit of highest invention and sweetest song before it had found its final form, much is here also that is still all Shakespearian—the vivid conception, the inexhaustible fertility and richness of thought and imagery, the glowing passion, the enamoured sense of beauty, the living words, the ear-delighting and heart-enthralling music; nay, even the dramatic instinct itself, and the idea at least, if not always the realization, of that sentiment of all subordinating and consummating art of which his dramas are the most wonderful exemplification in literature. If some of the sonnets read to-day like subtle and elaborate compliment, others, intense and sincere, explore the secrets of human psychology with amazing certitude of language.

SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC WORKS

William Shakespeare, the son of John Shakespeare, a well-to-do merchant of Stratford-on-Avon, and of his wife, Mary Arden, was born in his father's town on April 22 or 23, 1564. John Shakespeare became less affluent as time went on; but his son was probably educated at the Grammar School, where he would chiefly be taught Latin language and literature. He may have left it in 1577. Tradition declares him to have been a butcher for a brief period. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway. Soon, finding himself a somewhat penniless husband and father, he left Stratford in 1585, and went to seek fortune in London. He found some employment at the playhouse, became an actor, and finally an actor-dramatist. He played as a member of the King's Company, first at the Theatre, Shoreditch, and, after 1599, at the Globe.

His London life is a long record of work done and prosperity achieved. In 1596 he returned to Stratford to relieve his father from the attacks of creditors. After this he paid a yearly visit to his native town till the close of his professional life. In 1596 his only son Hamnet was buried. In the same year his father applied to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms. In 1597 Shakespeare purchased the largest house in Stratford, namely, New Place. The archives of the town thenceforth bear witness to his growing riches. In 1599, when the Globe Theatre was built, he obtained a share in the profits; and he also had an interest in the Blackfriars Theatre, besides his gains as dramatist and actor. Between 1599 and 1611 he acquired a large landed estate. After 1612 Shakespeare abandoned composition and the theatre, returning to Stratford-on-Avon, where he lived an obscure and evidently tranquil life occupied with civic and local matters. His daughters, Susanna and Judith, both married during this period. He died on April 25, 1616, and was buried outside Stratford Church. Most of his property was left to Susanna Hall.

According to our later criticism, his works may be enumerated in the following order: To 1591 belong *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the *Comedy of Errors*. In 1592 he wrote *Romeo and Juliet* and adapted the three parts of *Henry VI.*, touched up *Titus Andronicus*, and composed *Richard III.* and *Richard II.* *Venus and Adonis* belongs to 1593. In 1594 was written *The Merchant of Venice*, and the old play of *King John* was altered. The poem of *Lucrece* also belongs to this year, and the *Sonnets* may roughly be allotted to this period. In 1595 came the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Both parts of *Henry IV.* belong to 1597; also *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The year 1598 saw *Henry V.*; and in 1599 Taggard issued the *Passionate Pilgrim*, in which were pirated two of the sonnets. In 1601 his name was appended to *The Phœnix and the Turtle*, a cryptic poem issued with Chester's *Love's Martyr*. The year 1599 also contained the plays of *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. *Julius Cæsar* appeared in 1601, *Hamlet* in 1602, *Troilus and Cressida* in 1603, *Othello* and *Measure for Measure* in 1604, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* in 1606, *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*, in which collaboration is manifest, in 1607, *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1608, *Coriolanus* in 1609, *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest* between 1611 and 1612. Before leaving London, also, he evidently drafted the plays of the *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII.*, finished by Fletcher.

Such, then, is the sum of the treasure that Shakespeare has left us; but the revolution which his genius wrought upon our national drama is placed in the clearest light by comparing his earliest plays with the best which the language possessed before his time. He has made all his predecessors obsolete. Where are now the best productions even of such writers as Greene, and Peele, and Marlowe, and Decker, and Marston, and Webster, and Thomas Heywood, and Middleton? They are to be found among our *Select Collections of Old Plays*—publications intended rather for the mere preservation of the pieces contained in them than for their diffusion among a multitude of readers. Or, if the entire works of a few of these elder dramatists have recently been collected and republished, this has still been done only to meet the demand of a comparatively very small number of curious students, anxious to possess and examine for themselves whatever relics are still recoverable of the old world of our literature. Popularly known and read the works of these writers never again will be: there is no more prospect or probability of this than there is that the plays of Shakespeare will ever lose their popularity among his countrymen. He did not create our regular drama, but he regenerated and wholly transformed it, as if by breathing into it a new soul. We possess no dramatic production anterior to his appearance that is at once a work of high genius and of anything like equably sustained power throughout. Very brilliant flights of poetry there are in many of the pieces of our earlier dramatists; but their great efforts are made only by fits and starts. For the most part it must be confessed that the best of them are often merely extravagant and absurd. From this undisciplined state our drama was first redeemed by Shakespeare. Even Milton has spoken of his "wood-notes wild"; and Thomson, more unceremoniously, has baptized him "wild Shakespeare"[1]—as if a sort of half insane irregularity of genius were the quality that chiefly distinguished him from other great writers. If he be a "wild" writer, it is in comparison with some dramatists and poets of succeeding times, who, it must be admitted, are sufficiently tame: compared with the dramatists of his own age and of the age immediately preceding,—with the general throng of the writers from among whom he emerged, and the coruscations of whose feebler and more desultory genius he has made pale,—he is distinguished from them most obviously by the superior regularity and elaboration that mark his productions. Marlowe, and Greene, and Kyd may be called wild, and wayward, and careless; but the epithets are inapplicable to Shakespeare, by whom, in truth, it was that the rudeness of our early drama was first subdued to art. It was the union of the most consummate judgment with the highest creative power that made Shakespeare the miracle that he was—if, indeed, we ought not rather to say that such an endowment as his necessarily implied the clearest and truest discernment as well as the utmost productive energy,—even as the most intense heat must illuminate as well as warm.

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[1] "Is not wild Shakespeare thine and Nature's boast?"—Thomson's *Summer*.

But, undoubtedly, his dramas are distinguished from those of his predecessors by much more than this superiority in the general principles upon which they are constructed. Such rare passages of exquisite poetry, and scenes of sublimity or true passion, as frequently illuminate their obscure tragedies, are equalled or excelled in almost every page of his;—"the highest heaven of invention," where their strength of pinion never sustains them long, is the familiar home of his genius. Other qualities, again, which charm us in his plays are nearly unknown in theirs. He first informed our drama with true wit and humour. Of boisterous, uproarious, blackguard merriment and buffoonery there is no want in our earlier dramatists, nor of mere gibing and vulgar personal satire; but of true airy wit there is little or none. In the comedies of Shakespeare the wit plays and dazzles like dancing light. This seems to have been the excellence, indeed, for which he was most admired by his contemporaries; for quickness and felicity of repartee they placed him above all other play-writers. But his humour was still more his own than his wit. In that rich but delicate and subtile spirit of drollery, moistening and softening whatever it touches, and penetrating through all rigorous encrustments into the kernel of the ludicrous that is in everything, which mainly created Malvolio, and Shallow, and Slender, and Dogberry, and Verges, and Bottom, and Lancelot, and Launce, and Costard, and Touchstone, and a score of other clowns, fools, and simpletons, and which, gloriously overflowing in Falstaff, makes his wit exhilarate like wine, Shakespeare has had almost as few successors as he had predecessors.

And in these and all his other delineations he has, like every other great poet, or artist, not merely observed and described, but, as we have said, created, or invented. Shakespeare has shown that it belongs to such an imagination as his to create in comedy, as well as in tragedy or in poetry of any other kind. Most of the characters that have just been mentioned are as truly the mere creations of the poet's brain as are Ariel, or Caliban, or the Witches in *Macbeth*.

But in the region of realism, too, there is no other drama so rich as that of Shakespeare. He has exhausted the old world of our actual experience as well as imagined for us new worlds of his own.[1] What other anatomist of the human heart has searched his hidden core, and laid bare all the strength and weakness of our mysterious nature, as he has done in the tenderness of Juliet, the "fine frenzy" of the discrowned Lear, the sublime melancholy of Hamlet, the wrath of the perplexed and tempest-torn Othello, and the eloquent misanthropy of Timon, and the fixed hate of Shylock? What other poetry has given shape to anything half so terrible as Lady Macbeth, so winning as Rosalind, or so full of gentlest womanhood as Desdemona? In what other drama do we behold so living a humanity as in his? Who has given us a scene either so crowded with diversities of character, or so stirred with the heat and hurry of actual existence?

Nor even in his plays is Shakespeare merely a dramatist. Apart altogether from his dramatic power he is the greatest poet that ever lived. His sympathy is the most universal, his imagination the most plastic, his diction the most expressive, ever given to any writer. His poetry has in itself the power and varied excellences of all other poetry. While in grandeur, and beauty, and passion, and sweetest music, and all the other higher gifts of song, he may be ranked with the greatest,—with Spenser, and Chaucer, and Milton, and Dante, and Homer,—he is at the same time more nervous than Dryden, and more sententious than Pope, and more sparkling, and of more abounding conceit, when he chooses, than Donne, or Cowley, or Butler. In whose handling was language ever such a flame of fire as it is in his? His wonderful potency in the use of this instrument would alone set him above all other writers.[2] Language has been called the costume of thought:

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[1] "Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new."—JOHNSON.

[2] Whatever may be the extent of the vocabulary of the English language, it is certain that the most copious writer has not employed more than a fraction of the entire number of words of which it consists. It has been stated that some inquiries set on foot by the telegraph companies have led

it is such a costume as leaves are to the tree or blossoms to the flower, and grows out of what it adorns. Every great and original writer accordingly has distinguished, and as it were individualized, himself as much by his diction as by the sentiment which it embodies: and the invention of such a distinguishing style is one of the most unequivocal evidences of genius. But Shakespeare has invented twenty styles. He has a style for every one of his great characters, by which that character is distinguished from every other as much as Pope is distinguished by his style from Dryden, or Milton from Spenser. And yet all the while it is he himself with his own peculiar accent that we hear in every one of them. The style, or manner of expression, that is to say,—and, if the manner of expression, then also the manner of thinking, of which the expression is always the product—is at once both that which belongs to the particular character and that which is equally natural to the poet, the conceiver and creator of the character. This double individuality, or combination of two individualities, is inherent of necessity in all dramatic writing; it is what distinguishes the imaginative here from the literal, the artistic from the real, a scene of a play from a police report. No more in this than in any other kind of literature, properly so called, can we dispense with the infusion of the mind from which the work has proceeded, of something belonging to that mind and to no other, which is the very life or constituent principle of all art, the one thing that makes the difference between a creation and a copy, between the poetical and the mechanical.

Beaumont and Fletcher

Of the dramatic writers of the present period that hold rank the nearest to Shakespeare, the names of Beaumont and Fletcher must be regarded as indicating one poet rather than two, for it is impossible to make anything of the contradictory accounts that have been handed down as to their respective shares in the plays published in their conjoint names, and the

to the conclusion that the number of words in ordinary use does not exceed 3000. A rough calculation, founded on Mrs. Clarke's *Concordance*, gives about 21,000 as the number to be found in the Plays of Shakespeare, without counting inflectional forms as distinct words. Probably the vocabulary of no other of our great writers is nearly so extensive. Todd's *Verbal Index* would not give us more than about 7000 for Milton; so that, if we were to add even fifty per cent. to compensate for Milton's inferior voluminousness, the Miltonic vocabulary would still be not more than half as copious as the Shakespearian.

plays themselves furnish no evidence that is more decisive. The only ascertained facts relating to this point are the following:—that John Fletcher was some years older than his friend Francis Beaumont, the former having been born about 1579, the latter in 1585–6 (?); that Beaumont, however, so far as is known, came first before the world as a writer of poetry, his translation of the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, from the Fourth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, having been published in 1602, when he was only in his seventeenth year; that the *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* (consisting of only a few pages), produced in 1612, was written by Beaumont alone; that the pastoral drama of *The Faithful Shepherdess* is entirely Fletcher's; that the first published of the pieces which have been ascribed to the two associated together, the comedy of *The Woman-Hater*, appeared in 1607; that Beaumont died in March, 1616; and that, between that date and the death of Fletcher, in 1625, there were brought out, as appears from the note-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Deputy Master of the Revels, at least eleven of the plays found in the collection of their works, besides two others that were brought out in 1626, and two more that are lost. Deducting the fourteen pieces which thus appear certainly to belong to Fletcher exclusively (except that in one of them, *The Maid in the Mill*, he is said to have been assisted by Rowley), there still remain thirty-seven or thirty-eight which it is possible they may have written together in the nine or ten years over which their poetical partnership is supposed to have extended.[1] Eighteen of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, including the *Masque* by the former and the *Pastoral* by the latter, were published separately before 1640; thirty-four more were first published together in a folio volume in 1647; and the whole were reprinted, with the addition of a comedy, supposed to have been lost (*The Wild Goose Chase*),[2] making a collection of fifty-three pieces in all, in another folio, in 1679. Among the most popular plays by the one or the other or both are the *Maid's Tragedy*, 1619; *Philaster*, 1620; *A King and no King*, 1619; the *Scornful Lady*, the *Humorous Lieutenant*, *Bonduca*, 1647; Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 1634; *Thierry and Theodoret*, 1621. Beaumont and Fletcher want altogether that *white heat* of passion by which

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[1] One, the comedy of *The Coronation*, is also attributed to Shirley.

[2] This play, one of the best of Fletcher's comedies, for it was not produced till some years after Beaumont's death, had been previously recovered and printed by itself in 1652.

Shakespeare fuses all things into life and poetry at a touch, often making a single brief utterance flash upon us a full though momentary view of a character, which all that follows deepens and fixes, and makes the more like to actual seeing with the eyes and hearing with the ears. His was a deeper, higher, in every way more extended and capacious nature than theirs. They want his profound meditative philosophy as much as they do his burning poetry. There is scarcely one of their dramas that does not bear marks of haste and carelessness, or of a blight in some part or other from compliances with playhouse tastes. Yet their genius springs up again from the dust and mud, as gay a creature of the element as ever, soaring and singing at heaven's gate as if it had never touched the ground. Nothing can go beyond the flow and brilliancy of the dialogue of these writers in their happier scenes; it is the richest stream of real conversation, edged with the fire of poetry. For the drama of Beaumont and Fletcher is as essentially poetical and imaginative, though not so daringly, as that of Shakespeare; and they, too, even if they were not great dramatists, would still be great poets. Much of their verse is among the sweetest in the language; and many of the lyrical passages, in particular, with which their plays are interspersed, have a diviner soul of song in them than almost any other compositions of the same class. As dramatists they are far inferior to Shakespeare, not only in truth and force of conception,—but also both in the originality and the variety of their creations; they have confined themselves to a comparatively small number of broadly distinguished figures, which they delineate in a dashing, scene-painting fashion, bringing out their peculiarities rather by force of situation, and contrast with one another, than by the form and aspect with which each individually looks forth and emerges from the canvas. But they paint with the boldness of conscious power, and with wonderful skill and effect. Their invention of plot and incident is fertile in the highest degree; and in the conduct of a story for the mere purposes of the stage,—for keeping the attention of an audience awake and their expectation suspended throughout the whole course of the action,—they excel Shakespeare. By reason principally of this difference, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, in the great days of the stage, and so long as the state of public manners tolerated their licence, were much greater favourites than those of Shakespeare in our theatres; two of theirs, Dryden tells us, were acted in his time for one of Shakespeare's; their intrigues,—their lively and florid but not subtle dialogue,—their strongly-marked but somewhat exaggerated representations of character,—their exhibitions of passion, apt to run a little into the melodramatic,—were more level to the general apprehension, and were found to be more entertaining. Beaumont and Fletcher, as might be inferred from what has already been said, are, upon the whole, greater in comedy than in tragedy; and they seem themselves to have felt that their genius led them more to the former. But, on the other hand, all their tragedies have also some comic passages; and, in regard to this matter, indeed, their plays may be generally described as consisting, in the words of the prologue to one of them,[1] of

> "Passionate scenes mixed with no vulgar mirth."

Undoubtedly, taking them all in all, they have left us the richest and most magnificent drama we possess after that of Shakespeare; the most instinct and alive both with the true dramatic spirit and with that of general poetic beauty and power; the most brilliantly lighted up with wit and humour; the freshest and most vivid, as well as various, picture of human manners and passions.

JONSON

Ben Jonson was born in 1573, or six years before Fletcher, whom he survived twelve years, dying in 1637. He is supposed to have begun to write for the stage so early as 1593; but nothing that he produced attracted any attention till his comedy of *Every Man in his Humour* was brought out at the Rose Theatre in 1596. This play, greatly altered and improved, was published in 1598: and between that date and his death Jonson produced above fifty more dramatic pieces in all, of which ten are comedies, three what he called comical satires, only two tragedies, and all the rest masques, pageants, or other court entertainments. His two tragedies of *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are dignified but cold; and his fame rests chiefly upon his first comedy, his three subsequent comedies of *Volpone, or The Fox* (1605); *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman* (1609); and *The Alchemist* (1610), his court masques, and a Pastoral entitled *The Sad Shepherd*, which was left unfinished at his death. Other notable comedies were *The Case is Altered* (1609), *Every Man out of His Humour*, *Cynthia's Revel*, *The Poetaster*,

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[1] *The Custom of the Country.*

The Devil is an Ass. He also achieved epigrams, and some fine lyric verse, collected in *Underwoods* and the *Forest*; while a volume of prose studies bears the name of *Discoveries.* Ben Jonson's comedies admit of no comparison with those of Shakespeare or of Beaumont and Fletcher: he belongs to another school. His plays are professed attempts to revive, in English, the old classic Roman drama, and aim in their construction at a rigorous adherence to the models afforded by those of Plautus, and Terence, and Seneca. They are admirable for their elaborate art, which is, moreover, informed by a power of strong conception of a decidedly original character; they abound both in wit and eloquence, which in some passages kindles to the glow of poetry; the figures of the scene stand out in high relief, every one of them, from the most important to the most insignificant, being finished with the minutest care; the dialogue carries on the action, and is animated in many parts with the right dramatic reciprocation; and the plot is in general contrived and evolved with the same learned skill, and the same attention to details, that are shown in all other particulars. But the execution, even where it is most brilliant, is hard and angular; the whole has an air of constraint, of effort, and exaggeration; and the effect that is produced by the most arresting passages is the most undramatic that can be,—namely, a greater sympathy with the performance as a work of art than as anything else. It may be added that Jonson's characters, though vigorously delineated, and though not perhaps absolutely false to nature, are in too many cases embodied "humours"; they are the oddities and perversions of a particular age or state of manners, and have no universal truth or interest. Yet characters like Bobadil and Sir Epicure Mammon have entered into immortality. What is called the humour of Jonson consists chiefly in the exhibition of the more ludicrous kinds of these morbid aberrations. Like everything about him, it has force and raciness enough, but it seldom or never makes the heart laugh, like the humour of Shakespeare,—which is, indeed, a quality of altogether another essence. As Swinburne says, "There is nothing accidental in the work of Ben Jonson. No casual inspiration, no fortunate impulse, ever guides or misguides his genius aright or astray." As a poet, Jonson is greatest in his masques and other court pageants. The airy elegance of these compositions is a perfect contrast to the stern and rugged strength of his other works; the lyrical parts of them especially have often a grace and sportiveness, a flow as well as a finish, the effect of which is very brilliant. In Jonson's unfinished pastoral of *The Sad Shepherd* there is some picturesque description and more very harmonious verse, and the best parts of it (much of it is poor enough) are perhaps in a higher style than anything else he has written; but to compare it, as has sometimes been done, either as a poem or as a drama, with *The Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher seems to us to evince a deficiency of true feeling for the highest things, equal to what would be shown by preferring, as has also been done by some critics, the humour of Jonson to that of Shakespeare. Fletcher's pastoral, blasted as it is in some parts by fire not from heaven, is still a green and leafy wilderness of poetical beauty; Jonson's, deformed also by some brutality more elaborate than anything of the same sort in Fletcher, is at the best but a trim garden, and, had it been ever so happily finished, would have been nothing more.

MASSINGER; FORD; MARSTON; DEKKER; MIDDLETON; WEBSTER; HEYWOOD; TOURNEUR; DAY

Philip Massinger was born in 1583, and is supposed to have begun to write for the stage soon after 1606, although his first published play, his tragedy of *The Virgin Martyr*, in which he was assisted by Dekker, did not appear till 1622. Of thirty-eight dramatic pieces which he is said to have written, only eighteen have been preserved; eight others were in the collection of Mr. Warburton, which his servant destroyed. Massinger, like Jonson, had received a learned education, and his classic reading has coloured his style and manner; but he had scarcely so much originality of genius as Jonson. He is a very eloquent writer, but has little power of high imagination or pathos, and still less wit or comic power. He could rise, however, to a vivid conception of a character moved by some single aim or passion; and he has drawn some of the darker shades of villainy with great force. His Sir Giles Overreach, in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and his Luke in the *City Madam*, are perhaps his most successful delineations in this style. The *Unnatural Combat* and the *Duke of Milan* have some strong scenes. In the conduct of his plots, also, he generally displays much skill. In short, all that can be reached by the deliberate intellectual effort of a prose genius he has achieved. "Massinger had not the higher requisites of his art in anything like the degree in which they were possessed by Ford, Webster, and others. He never shakes nor disturbs the mind with grief. He is read with composure and placid delight."—Lamb.

John Ford, the author of about a dozen plays that have survived, and one of whose pieces is known to have been acted so early as 1613, has one quality, that of a deep pathos, perhaps more nearly allied to high genius than any Massinger has shown. His blank verse, moreover, has a delicate beauty, sometimes a warbling wildness and richness, beyond anything in the other's fuller swell. He is a subtle analyst of extreme and perverse conditions of passion, a psychologist of the abnormal. His two greatest plays are *The Broken Heart* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633). Other dramas are *Love's Sacrifice*, the *Lover's Melancholy*, *Perkin Warbeck*, and the *Lady's Trial* (1629). "Ford was of the first order of poets," says Charles Lamb. "He sought for sublimity not by parcels in metaphors or visible images, but directly where she has her full residence in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds.

Among other notable dramatists is Marston, the author of the curious *Antonio and Mellida* (1602), a wild play on the Spanish tragedy model, and the well-planned *Malcontent* (1604). In *Eastward Ho* (1605) he joined forces with Jonson and Dekker. Though violent and insincere he is capable of powerful scenes.

Thomas Dekker worked out a romantic comedy of much sweetness and original humour, relieved by passages of great lyric beauty. His best-known plays are the *Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), *Comedy of Old Fortunatus* (1600), *Honest Whore*—two parts, in which Middleton assisted him (1604–1630), *Patient Grissel*, and *The Witch of Edmonton*, where he had Ford for collaborator. He helped Massinger with the "sweet pieties" of *The Virgin Martyr*, in a way which led Charles Lamb to declare he had "poetry enough for anything."

Thomas Middleton (1570–1627) could at times rise into the high tragic realm, yet had also a talent for wild and boisterous comedy, of which *The Spanish Gipsey* is the pleasantest example. *The Mayor of Queenborough* and *Women beware Women* (1657) are strong plays; but his masterpiece is *The Changeling*, with its terrible encounters between Beatrice and De Flores.

John Webster, that obscure and strange genius, evidently helped in the composition of many plays. Undoubtedly his own, however, are *The White Devil* (1612), *The Duchess of*

Malfi (1623), *The Devil's Law Case* (1623), and *Appius and Virginia* (1657). The first two are tragedies of pity and terror, with impassioned and lurid figures cast on their gloom, each containing some lines of unsurpassable force and ecstasy.

Thomas Heywood, Lamb's "prose Shakespeare," has for his masterpiece the simple and pathetic *Woman killed with kindness* (1607). Cyril Tourneur carried the drama of blood and horror to its extreme limit in the *Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) and the *Revenger's Tragedy* (1607). John Day, who died in 1640, wrote a dramatic allegory called the *Parliament of Bees*, and some comedy of a bright and clear temper.

LATER ELIZABETHAN PROSE

By the end of the sixteenth century, our prose, as exhibited in its highest examples, had gained considerably in copiousness, in sonorousness, and in splendour. The weaker styles are spoiled by a long-winded wordiness, and an awkwardness and intricacy, sometimes so excessive as to be nearly unintelligible, produced by piling clause upon clause, and involution upon involution, in the endeavour to crowd into every sentence as much meaning or as many particulars as possible. It ought also to be noticed that towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth a singularly artificial mode of composition became fashionable, more especially in sermons and other theological writings, consisting mainly in the remotest or most recondite analogies of thought and the most elaborate verbal ingenuities or conceits, a manner at the opposite pole in popular preaching to what we have in the plainness and simplicity, natural sometimes even to buffoonery, of Latimer.

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

The authorized translation of the Bible, on the whole so admirable both for correctness and beauty of style, is apt, on the first thought, to be regarded as exhibiting the actual state of the language in the time of James I., when it was first published. It is to be remembered, however, that the new translation was formed, by the special directions of the king, upon the basis of that of Parker's, or the Bishops' Bible, which had been made nearly forty years before, and which had itself been founded upon that of Cranmer, made in the reign of Henry VIII. The consequence is, as Hallam has remarked, that, whether the style of King James's translation be the perfection of the English language or no, it is not the language of his reign.

"It may, in the eyes of many," adds Hallam, "be a better English, but it is not the English of Daniel, or Raleigh, or Bacon, as any one may easily perceive. It abounds, in fact, especially in the Old Testament, with obsolete phraseology, and with single words long since abandoned, or retained only in provincial use."[1] This is, perhaps, rather strongly put; for although the preceding version served as a general guide to the translators, and was not needlessly deviated from, they have evidently modernized its style, not perhaps quite up to that of their own day, but so far, we apprehend, as to exclude nearly all words and phrases that had then passed out even of common and familiar use. In that theological age, indeed, few forms of expression found in the Bible could well have fallen altogether into desuetude, although some may have come to be less apt and significant than they once were, or than others that might now be substituted for them. But we believe the new translators, in any changes they made, were very careful to avoid the employment of any mere words of yesterday, the glare of whose recent coinage would have contrasted offensively with the general antique colour of diction which they decided to retain. The English Bible is a tissue of wonderful cadences and perfect felicities of language.

THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.—BISHOP ANDREWES; DONNE; HALL; HOOKER

Besides the translation of the Bible, the portion of the English literature of the present period that is theological is very great in point of quantity, and a part of it also possesses distinguished claims to notice from a literary point of view. Religion was the great subject of speculation and controversy in this country throughout the entire space of a century and a half between the Reformation and the Revolution.

One of the most eminent preachers, of the age of Elizabeth and James, was Dr. Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626), who, after having held the sees of Chichester and Ely, died bishop of Winchester in 1626. Bishop Andrews was one of the translators of the Bible, and is the author, among other works, of a folio volume of Sermons published, by direction of Charles I., soon after his death; of another folio volume of Tracts and Speeches, which appeared in 1629; of a third volume of Lectures on the Ten Commandments, published in 1642; and of a fourth, containing Lectures delivered at St. Paul's and at

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[1] *Lit. of Eur.*, ii. 464.

St. Giles's, Cripplegate, published in 1657. Both the learning and ability of Andrewes are conspicuous in everything he has written; though his eloquence, nevertheless, is to a modern taste grotesque enough. In his more ambitious passages he is the very prince of verbal posture-masters,—if not the first in date, the first in extravagance, of the artificial, quibbling, syllable-tormenting school of our English pulpit rhetoricians.

Donne, the poet, was also a voluminous writer in prose; having left a folio volume of Sermons, besides a treatise against Popery entitled *The Pseudo-Martyr*, another singular pamphlet entitled *Biathanatos*, in confutation of the common notion about the necessary sinfulness of suicide, and some other professional disquisitions. His biographer, Izaak Walton, says that he preached "as an angel, *from* a cloud, but not in a cloud"; but most modern readers will probably be of opinion that he has not quite made his escape from it. His manner is fully as quaint in his prose as in his verse, and his way of thinking as subtle and peculiar. His style is obscure, but full of strange lights.

Another of the most learned theologians and eloquent preachers of those times was also an eminent poet, Bishop Joseph Hall. Hall's English prose works, which are very voluminous, consist of sermons, polemical tracts, paraphrases of Scripture, casuistical divinity, and some pieces on practical religion, of which his *Contemplations*, his *Art of Divine Meditation*, and his *Enochismus, or Treatise on the Mode of Walking with God*, are the most remarkable. The poetic temperament of Hall reveals itself in his prose, by the fervour of his piety, and the forcible and often picturesque character of his style.

Last of all may be mentioned, among the great theological writers of this great theological time, one who stands alone, Richard Hooker (1553–1600), the illustrious author of the Eight Books of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*; of which the first four were published in 1594, the fifth in 1597, the last three not till 1632, many years after the author's death. Hooker's style is almost without a rival for its sustained dignity of march; but that which makes it most remarkable is its union of all this learned gravity and correctness with a flow of genuine, racy English, almost as little tinctured with pedantry as the most familiar popular writing. The effect also of its evenness of movement is the very reverse of tameness or languor; the full river of the argument dashes over no precipices, but yet rolls along without pause, and with great force and buoyancy. The tolerance and catholicity of his temper works out a calm and majestic beauty of style.

BACON (1561–1626)

Undoubtedly the principal figure in English prose literature, as well as in philosophy, during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, is Francis Bacon. Bacon, born in 1561, published the first edition of his *Essays* in 1597; his *Two Books of the Advancement of Learning* in 1605; his *Wisdom of the Ancients* (in Latin) in 1610; a third edition of his *Essays*, greatly extended, in 1612; his Two Books of the *Novum Organum*, or Second Part of the *Instauratio Magna*, designed to consist of Six Parts (also in Latin), in 1620; his *History of the Reign of Henry VII.*, in 1622; his Nine Books *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, a Latin translation and extension of his *Advancement of Learning*, in 1623; the *New Atlantis*, in 1627. He died in 1626. The originality of the Baconian or Inductive method of philosophy, the actual service it has rendered to science, and even the end which it had in view, have all been subjects of dispute almost ever since Bacon's own day; but, notwithstanding all differences of opinion upon these points, the acknowledgment that he was of great intellectual strength has been nearly unanimous. They who have not seen his greatness under one form have discovered it in another; there is a discordance among men's ways of looking at him; but the mighty shadow which he projects athwart the two bygone centuries lies there immovable. As for his *Novum Organum*, or so-called new instrument of philosophy, it may be that it was not really new when he announced it as such, either as a process followed in the practice of scientific discovery, or as a theory of the right method of discovery. Neither may Bacon have been the first writer, in his own or the immediately preceding age, who recalled attention to the inductive method, or who pointed out the barrenness of what was then called philosophy in the schools. Nor can it be affirmed that it was really he who brought the reign of that philosophy to a close; it was falling fast into disrepute before he assailed it, and would probably have passed away quite as soon as it did although his writings had never appeared. Nor possibly has he looked at that old philosophy with a very penetrating or comprehensive eye, or even shown a perfect understanding of the inductive method in all its applications and principles. But this was not Bacon's proper province. He belongs not to mathematical or natural science, but to literature and to moral science in its most extensive acceptation,—to the realm of imagination, of wit, of eloquence, of æsthetics, of history, of jurisprudence, of political philosophy, of logic, of metaphysics and the investigation of the powers and operations of the human mind. He is either not at all or in no degree worth mentioning as an investigator or expounder of mathematics, or of mechanics, or of astronomy, or of chemistry, or of any other branch of geometrical or physical science; but he is a most penetrating and comprehensive investigator, and a most magnificent expounder, of that higher wisdom in comparison with which all these things are but a more intellectual sort of legerdemain. All his works, his essays, his philosophical writings, commonly so called, and what he has done in history, are of one and the same character; reflective and, so to speak, poetical, not simply demonstrative, or elucidatory of mere matters of fact. An intellect at once most capacious, most profound—in its powers of vision at the same time one of the most penetrating and one of the most far-reaching—was in him united and reconciled with an almost equal endowment of the imaginative faculty; and that he is, therefore, of all philosophical writers, the one in whom are found together, in the largest proportions, depth of thought and splendour of eloquence. His intellectual ambition, also,—a quality of the imagination,—was of the most towering character; and no other philosophic writer has taken up so grand a theme as that on which he has laid out his strength in his greatest works. But with the progress of scientific discovery that has taken place during the last two hundred years, it would be difficult to show that these works have had almost anything to do. His *Advancement of Learning* and his *Novum Organum* have more in them of the spirit of poetry than of science; and we should almost as soon think of fathering modern physical science upon *Paradise Lost* as upon them.

BURTON (1576–1639)

A remarkable prose work of this age is Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Robert Burton, who, on his title-page, takes the name of Democritus Junior, died in 1639, and his book was first published in 1621. It is an extraordinary accumulation of out-of-the-way learning, interspersed, somewhat in the manner of Montaigne's *Essays*, with original matter, but with this among other differences,—that in Montaigne the quotations are introduced to illustrate the original matter, which is the web of the discourse, they but the embroidery; whereas in Burton the learning is rather the web, upon which what he has got to say of his own is worked in by way of forming a sort of decorative figure. Burton is far from having the variety or abundance of Montaigne; but there is considerable point and penetration in his style, and he says many striking things in a sort of half-splenetic, half-jocular humour, which many readers have found wonderfully stimulating. Dr. Johnson declared that Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was the only book that ever drew him out of bed an hour sooner than he would otherwise have got up.

HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS

Among the historical writers of the reign of James may be first mentioned the all-accomplished Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh is the author of a few short poems, and of some miscellaneous pieces in prose; but his great work is his *History of the World*, composed during his imprisonment in the Tower, and first published in a folio volume in 1614. It is an unfinished work, coming down only to the first Macedonian war; and there is no reason to suppose that any more of it was ever written, although it has been asserted that a second volume was burnt by the author. Raleigh's *History*, as a record of facts, has long been superseded; the interest it possesses at the present day is derived almost entirely from its literary merits, and from a few passages in which the author takes occasion to allude to circumstances that have fallen within his own experience. Much of it is written without any ambition of eloquence; long sketches of narration are quite undistinguished: but certain passages reach a gorgeous imagery and a great beauty of sound.

Another celebrated historical work of this time is Richard Knolles's *History of the Turks*, published in 1610. We have already mentioned Samuel Daniel's *History of England from the Conquest to the Reign of Edward III.*, which was published in 1618. It is of little historical value, but is remarkable for the same simple ease and purity of language which distinguish Daniel's verse.

Among the memorable prose purveyors of early sea-voyages and far discoveries are Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, the collectors and arrangers of the travellers' miscellanies of this period. Hakluyt's famous collection of voyages, which can now easily be obtained by every student, is in many ways the true counterpart to the greater Elizabethan plays. The same spirit of adventurous and tireless imagination is in both.

As vividly picturing the life at home, as these books of travel the life abroad, Thomas Dekker's, the dramatist, prose writings, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *The Bellman of London*, and *The Gull's Horn Book* (partly adapted from the Dutch) must not be overlooked. The last appeared in 1609.

MIDDLE AND LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Our national literature, properly so called, had its noonday in the period comprehending the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth century. But a splendid afternoon flush succeeded this meridian blaze, which may be said to have lasted for another half-century, or longer. Down almost to the Revolution, or at least to the middle of the reign of Charles II., our higher literature continued to glow with more or less of the coloured light and the heart of fire which it had acquired in the age of Elizabeth and James. Some of the greatest of it, indeed—as the verse of Milton and the prose of Jeremy Taylor—was not given to the world till towards the close of the space we have just indicated. But Milton, and Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne, and Cudworth, and Henry More, and Cowley, the most eminent of our English writers in the interval from the Restoration to the Revolution (if we except Dryden, the founder of the new school) were all of them, it is worthy of observation, born before the close of the reign of James I. Nor would the stormy time that followed be without its nurture for such minds. A boyhood or youth passed in the days of Shakespeare and Bacon, and a manhood in those of the Great Rebellion, was a training which could not fail to rear high powers to their highest capabilities.

Shirley, and the End of the Old Drama

The chief glory of our Elizabethan literature, however, belongs almost exclusively to the time we have already gone over. The only other name that remains to be mentioned to complete our sketch of the great age of the Drama, is that of James Shirley (1596–1666), and whose first play, the comedy of *The Wedding*, was published in 1629. He is the author of about forty dramatic pieces which have come down to us. "Shirley," observes Lamb, "claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest came in with the Restoration."[1] Shirley wrote tragedies, comedies, and masques like *The Triumph of Peace.* His best tragedy is *The Traitor* (1631), his best comedy *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635).

A preface by Shirley is prefixed to the first collection of part of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, which, as already mentioned, appeared in 1647. "Now, reader," he says, "in this tragical age, where the theatre hath been so much outacted, congratulate thy own happiness that, in this silence of the stage, thou hast a liberty to read these inimitable plays,—to dwell and converse in these immortal groves,—which were only showed our fathers in a conjuring-glass, as suddenly removed as represented." At this time all theatrical amusements were prohibited; and the publication of these and of other dramatic productions which were their property, or rather the sale of them to the booksellers, was resorted to by the players as a way of making a little money when thus cut off from the regular gains of their profession; the eagerness of the public to possess the said works in print being of course also sharpened by the same cause.

The permanent suppression of theatrical entertainments was the act of the Long Parliament. An ordinance of the Lords and Commons passed on the 2nd of September, 1642,—after setting forth that "public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity,"—ordained, "that, while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne." It has been plausibly conjectured that this measure originated, "not merely in a spirit of religious dislike to dramatic performances, but in a politic caution, lest playwriters and players should avail themselves of their power over the minds of the people to instil notions and opinions hostile to the authority of a puritanical parliament."[2]

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[1] *Spec. of Eng. Dram. Poets*, ii. 119.

[2] Collier, *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, ii. 106.

This ordinance certainly put an end at once to the regular performance of plays; although it is known to have been occasionally infringed.

GILES FLETCHER; PHINEAS FLETCHER

Giles and Phineas Fletcher were brothers, cousins of the dramatist, and both clergymen. Giles, who died in 1623, is the author of a poem entitled *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death*, which was published in a quarto volume in 1610. It is divided into four parts, and is written in stanzas somewhat like those of Spenser, only containing eight lines each instead of nine: both the Fletchers, indeed, were professed disciples and imitators of the great author of the *Faërie Queene.* Phineas, who survived till 1650, published in 1633, along with a small collection of Piscatory Eclogues and other Poetical Miscellanies, a long allegorical poem, entitled *The Purple Island*, in twelve Books or Cantos, written in a stanza of seven lines. The idea upon which this performance is founded is one of the most singular that ever took possession of the brain even of an allegorist: the *purple island* is nothing else than the human body, and the poem is, in fact, for the greater part, a system of anatomy, nearly as minute in its details as if it were a scientific treatise, but wrapping up everything in a fantastic guise of double meaning, so as to produce a languid sing-song of laborious riddles, which are mostly unintelligible without the very knowledge they make a pretence of conveying. After he has finished his anatomical course, the author takes up the subject of psychology, which he treats in the same luminous and interesting manner. Such a work as this has no claim to be considered a poem even of the same sort with the *Faërie Queene. The Purple Island* is rather a production of the same species as Dr. Darwin's *Botanic Garden.* Of course, there is a good deal of ingenuity shown in Fletcher's poem; and it is not unimpregnated by poetic feeling, nor without some passages of considerable merit. But in many other parts it is quite grotesque; and, on the whole, it is fantastic, puerile, and wearisome.

CAROLINE RELIGIOUS POETS.—QUARLES; HERBERT; HERRICK; CRASHAW; VAUGHAN; TRAHERNE

The growth of the religious spirit in the early part of the seventeenth century is shown in much more of the poetry of the time as well as in that of the two Fletchers. Others of the most notable names of this age are Quarles, Herrick, Herbert, and Crashaw. Francis Quarles, who died in 1644, was one of the most popular and voluminous writers of the day, and is still generally known by his volume of *Emblems*, 1635. His verses are characterized by ingenuity rather than fancy, but, although often absurd, he is seldom dull or languid. There is a good deal of spirit and coarse vigour in some of his pieces, as for instance in his well-known *Song of Anarchus*. Quarles, however, though he appears to have been a person of considerable literary acquirement, must in his poetical capacity be regarded as mainly a literary journeyman. George Herbert (1593–1632), a younger brother of the celebrated Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and descended from a distinguished Welsh border family, died a parson of the English church, and one of the finest writers of the religious lyric in the language. His volume, entitled *The Temple*, was first published soon after his death in 1633, and was at least six or seven times reprinted in the course of the next quarter of a century. His biographer, Izaak Walton, tells us that when he wrote, in the reign of Charles II., twenty thousand copies of it had been sold. Herbert's is a singularly tender and gentle religious attitude. His conceits have a childlike quaintness, and many of his lyric movements are charmingly spontaneous and sweet. His quaintness lies in his thoughts rather than in their expression, which is in general sufficiently simple and luminous.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674), who was one of the "sons of Ben," which did not prevent his being also a clergyman, is the author of the ever-delightful *Hesperides*. His work consists, like the poetry of Donne, partly of love verses, partly of pieces of a devotional character, under the name of *Noble Numbers*. Yet both his hymns and his anacreontics, —for of such strange intermixture does his poetry consist—are beautifully simple and natural, and full of grace as well as fancy. Herrick is unique in his period for the limpidity, perfection and originality of his lyric utterance. Poems like *Daffodils*, *To Anthea*, the *Mad Maid's Song*, and *Corinna Maying* are as effortless, lucid and consummate as the flowers, while the *Litany* and the *Thanksgiving* bring something very dewy and tender into devotional poetry. Richard Crashaw (1613–1649) was another clergyman, who late in life became a Roman Catholic, and died a canon of Loretto in 1650. He is counted by some critics the greatest of these religious poets of the earliest part of the seventeenth century. He belongs in manner to the school of Donne and Herrick, and in his lighter pieces he has much of their lyrical sweetness and delicacy, while in passages of his religious verse he attains a flaming mysticism unknown to any other English devotional poet. *Steps to the Temple* appeared in 1646 ; *The Delights of the Muses* in 1648. His finest ecstasies appear in the two poems on Saint Teresa.

Henry Vaughan, "the Silurist" (1622–1690), another poet of Welsh stock, was the author of *Secular Poems* (1646), *Olor Iscanus* (1651), and *Silex Scintillans* (1650–1656). His poems are often unequal in expression, but at his rarest he touches a note of imagination and divination, which surpasses even that of his lyric master, George Herbert.

Thomas Traherne (1636–1674) has been recently discovered by Mr. Dobell. He is an exponent of the true mystical temper in poems like *Silence*, *The Choice*, *The Anticipation*. He is besides an exquisite prose-writer.

CARTWRIGHT ; RANDOLPH ; CORBET

All the poetical clergymen of this time, however, had not pious muses. The Rev. William Cartwright, who died at an early age in 1643, is said by Anthony Wood to have been "a most florid and seraphic preacher" ; but his poetry, which is mostly amatory, is not remarkable for its brilliancy. He is the author of several plays, and he was one of the young writers who were honoured with the title of his " sons " by Ben Jonson, who said of him, " My son Cartwright writes all like a man." Another of Ben's poetical sons was Thomas Randolph, who was likewise a clergyman, and is also the author of several plays, mostly in verse, as well as of a quantity of other poetry. Randolph has a good deal of fancy, and his verse flows clearly; but his poetry has in general a bookish and borrowed air. Much of it is on subjects of love and gallantry; but the love is chiefly of the head, or, at most, of the senses—the gallantry, it is easy to see, that merely of the fellow of a college and a reader of Ovid. Randolph died under thirty in 1634, and his poems were first collected after his death by his brother.

One of the most remarkable among the clerical poets of this earlier half of the seventeenth century was Dr. Richard Corbet, successively bishop of Oxford and of Norwich. Corbet, who was born in 1582, became famous both as a poet and as a wit early in the reign of James ; but very little, if any, of his poetry was published till after his death, which took place in 1635.

It is related that, after Corbet was a doctor of divinity, he once sang ballads at the Cross at Abingdon: "On a market day," Aubrey writes, "he and some of his comrades were at the tavern by the Cross (which, by the way, was then the finest in England; I remember it when I was a freshman; it was admirable curious Gothic architecture, and fine figures in the niches; 'twas one of those built by King . . . for his Queen). The ballad-singer complained he had no custom—he could not put off his ballads. The jolly doctor puts off his gown, and puts on the ballad-singer's leathern jacket, and, being a handsome man, and a rare full voice, he presently vended a great many, and had a great audience." Aubrey had heard, however, that as a bishop "he had an admirable grave and venerable aspect." Corbet's poetry, too, is a mixture or alternation of gravity and drollery. But it is the subject or occasion, rather than the style or manner, that makes the difference; he never rises to anything higher than wit; and he is as witty in his elegies as in his ballads. His happiest verses are the two that are best known, his *Journey into France* and his ballad of *The Fairies' Farewell.* His longest and most curious poem is his *Iter Boreale*, describing a journey which he took in company with three other university men, probably about 1620, from Oxford as far north as Newark and back again.

POETS OF THE CAVALIER SCHOOL.—CAREW; LOVELACE; SUCKLING

Both our poetry and our prose eloquence continued to be generally infected by the spirit of quaintness and conceit, or over-refinement and subtlety of thought. Even some of the highest minds did not entirely escape the contagion. Neither Shakespeare nor Bacon is altogether free from it. Of other writers it took captive not only the greater number, but some of the greatest, who lived and wrote from the middle of the reign of Elizabeth to nearly the middle of that of Charles II.—from Bishop Andrews, whom we have already mentioned, and Donne, to Cowley inclusive. The style in question appears to have been borrowed from Italy: it came in, at least, with the study and imitation of the Italian poetry, being caught apparently from the school of Petrarch, or rather of his later followers, about the same time that a different inspiration was drawn from Tasso and Ariosto.

Something at once more ironical and more *debonair*, due to the new French contact and inspiration, now begins to control and alter the lingering Elizabethan tradition.

Thomas Carew (1578–1639?), styled on the title-page "One of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, and Sewer in Ordinary to His Majesty," is the author of a small volume of poetry first printed in 1640, the year after his death.

Carew had a splendid sense of lyrical measure and a luxurian fancy. We note, however, a certain hardening of form that betrays the new note, even in the poet of *The Rapture*, the *Persuasions to Love*, and *Ask Me No More*. His *Elegy on Donne* is masculine and charged with intellectual energy.

The poems of Colonel Richard Lovelace (1618–1658) are contained in two small volumes, one entitled *Lucasta*, published in 1649; the other entitled *Posthume Poems*, published by his brother in 1659, the year after the author's death. They consist principally of songs and other short pieces. Lovelace's songs, which are mostly amatory, are many of them carelessly enough written, and there are very few of them not defaced by some harshness or deformity; but a few of his best pieces are as sweetly versified as Carew's, with perhaps greater variety of fancy as well as more of vital force; and a tone of chivalrous gentleness and honour gives to some of them a pathos beyond the reach of any mere poetic art. The two songs to Lucasta and Althea at least are immortal.

Lovelace's days, darkened in their close by the loss of everything except honour, were cut short at the age of forty; his contemporary, Sir John Suckling (1608–1641), who moved gaily and thoughtlessly through his short life as through a dance or a merry game, died, in 1641, at that of thirty-two. Suckling, who is the author of a small collection of poems, as well as of four plays, has none of the pathos of Lovelace or Carew, but he equals them in fluency and natural grace of manner, and he has besides a sprightliness and buoyancy which is all his own. His famous ballad of *The Wedding* is the very perfection of gaiety and archness in verse; and his *Session of the Poets*, in which he scatters about his wit and humour in a more careless style, constitutes him the founder of a species of satire which Cleveland and Marvel and other subsequent writers carried into new applications, and which expired among us only with Swift. The songs of the Marquis of Montrose belong to the gallant company of Cavalier lyrics. Habington's *Castara* is also courtly verse. About this time also Henry More, the Platonist, was writing his mystical *Song of the Soul*, while

Joseph Beaumont is equally philosophical in *Psyche*, or *Love's Mystery*.

WITHER

These last-mentioned writers—Carew, Lovelace, Suckling, Denham, and Cleveland—were all, as we have seen, cavaliers; but the cause of puritanism and the parliament had also its poets as well as that of love and loyalty. Of these the two most eminent were Marvel and Wither. Marvel's era, however, is rather after the Restoration. George Wither, who was born in 1588, covers nearly seventy years of the seventeenth century with his life, and not very far from sixty with his works: his first publication, his volume of satires entitled *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, having appeared in 1613, and some of his last pieces only a short time before his death in 1667. The entire number of his separate works, as they have been reckoned up by modern bibliographers, exceeds a hundred.

One excellence for which all Wither's writings are eminent, his prose as well as his verse, is their genuine English. His unaffected diction, even now, has scarcely a stain of age upon it,—but flows on, ever fresh and transparent, like a pebbled rill.

Down to the breaking out of the war between the king and the parliament, Wither, although his pious poetry made him a favourite with the puritans, had always professed himself a strong church and state man; even at so late a date as in 1639, when he was above fifty, he served as a captain of horse in the expedition against the Scotch Covenanters; and when two or three years after he took arms on the other side, he had yet his new principles in a great measure to seek or make. It appears not to have been till a considerable time after this that his old admiration of the monarchy and the hierarchy became suddenly converted into the conviction that both one and other were, and had been all along, only public nuisances—the fountains of all the misrule and misery of the nation. Wither, with all his ardour and real honesty, appears never in fact to have acquired any credit for reliability, or steadiness in the opinions he held, either from friends or opponents.

Much injustice, moreover, has been done to Wither by the hasty judgment that has been passed, even by his greatest admirers, upon his later political poetry, as if it consisted of mere party invective and fury, and all that he had written of any enduring value or interest was to be found in the productions of the early part of his life. Some at least of his political pieces are very remarkable for their vigour and terseness. As a specimen we will give a portion of a poem which he published without his name in 1647, under the title of "Amygdala Britannica; Almonds for Parrots; A Dish of Stone-fruit, partly shelled and partly unshelled; which, if cracked, picked, and well digested, may be wholesome against those epidemic distempers of the brain now predominant, and prevent some malignant diseases likely to ensue: Composed heretofore by a well-known modern author, and now published according to a copy found written with his own hand. *Qui bene latuit bene vixit.*" This fantastic title-page (with the manufacture of which the bookseller may have had more to do than Wither himself) was suited to the popular tastes of the day, but would little lead a modern reader to expect the nervous concentration and passionate earnestness of such verses as the following:—

The time draws near, and hasteth on,
In which strange works shall be begun;
And prosecutions, whereon shall
Depend much future bliss or bale.
If to the left hand you decline,
Assured destruction they divine;
But, if the right-hand course ye take,
This island it will happy make.

A time draws nigh in which you may
As you shall please the chess-men play;
Remove, confine, check, leave, or take,
Dispose, depose, undo, or make,
Pawn, rook, knight, bishop, queen, or king,
And act your wills in every thing:
But, if that time let slip you shall,
For yesterday in vain you call.

A time draws nigh in which the sun
Will give more light than he hath done:
Then also you shall see the moon
Shine brighter than the sun at noon;
And many stars now seeming dull
Give shadows like the moon at full.
Yet then shall some, who think they see,
Wrapt in Egyptian darkness be.

A time draws nigh when with your blood
You shall preserve the viper's brood,
And starve your own; yet fancy than[1]
That you have played the pelican;
But, when you think the frozen snakes
Have changed their natures for your sakes,
They, in requital, will contrive
Your mischief who did them revive.

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[1] Then.

A time will come when they that wake
Shall dream ; and sleepers undertake
The grand affairs ; yet,[1] few men know
Which are the dreamers of these two ;
And fewer care by which of these
They guided be, so they have ease :
But an alarum shall advance
Your drowsy spirits from that trance.

A time shall come ere long in which
Mere beggars shall grow soonest rich ;
The rich with wants be pinched more
Than such as go from door to door ;
The honourable by the base
Shall be despited to their face ;
The truth defamed be with lies ;
The fool preferred before the wise ;
And he that fighteth to be free,
By conquering enslaved shall be.

. . . . . .

A time will come when see you shall
Toads fly aloft and eagles crawl ;
Wolves walk abroad in human shapes ;
Men turn to asses, hogs, and apes :
But, when that cursed time is come,
Well 's he that is both deaf and dumb ;
That nothing speaketh, nothing hears,
And neither hopes, desires, nor fears.

. . . . . .

When men shall generally confess
Their folly and their wickedness ;
Yet act as if there neither were
Among them conscience, wit, or fear ;
When they shall talk as if they had
Some brains, yet do as they were mad ;
And nor by reason, nor by noise,
By human or by heavenly voice,
By being praised or reproved,
By judgements or by mercies, moved :
Then look for so much sword and fire
As such a temper doth require.

. . . . . .

Ere God His wrath on Balaam wreaks,
First by his ass to him He speaks ;
Then shows him in an angel's hand
A sword, his courses to withstand ;
But, seeing still he forward went,
Quite through his heart a sword He sent.
And God will thus, if thus they do,
Still deal with kings, and subjects too ;
That, where His grace despised is grown,
He by His judgements may be known.

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[1] As yet.

Neither Churchill nor Cowper ever wrote anything in the same style better than this. The modern air, too, of the whole, with the exception of a few words, is wonderful. But this, as we have said, is the character of all Wither's poetry—of his earliest as well as of his latest. It is nowhere more conspicuous than in his early religious verses, especially in his collection entitled *Hymns and Songs of the Church*, first published in 1623. There is nothing of the kind in the language more perfectly beautiful than some of these. We subjoin two of them:—

Thanksgiving for Seasonable Weather. Song 85.

Lord, should the sun, the clouds, the wind,
  The air, and seasons be
To us so froward and unkind
  As we are false to Thee;
All fruits would quite away be burned,
  Or lie in water drowned,
Or blasted be or overturned,
  Or chillèd on the ground.

But from our duty though we swerve,
  Thou still dost mercy show,
And deign Thy creatures to preserve,
  That men might thankful grow:
Yea, though from day to day we sin,
  And Thy displeasure gain,
No sooner we to cry begin
  But pity we obtain.

The weather now Thou changèd hast
  That put us late to fear,
And when our hopes were almost past
  Then comfort did appear.
The heaven the earth's complaints hath heard,
  They reconcilèd be;
And Thou such weather hast prepared
  As we desired of Thee.

For which, with lifted hands and eyes,
  To Thee we do repay
The due and willing sacrifice
  Of giving thanks to-day.
Because such offerings we should not
  To render Thee be slow,
Nor let that mercy be forgot
  Which Thou art pleased to show.

Thanksgiving for Victory. Song 88.

We love Thee, Lord, we praise Thy name,
  Who, by Thy great Almighty arm,
Hast kept us from the spoil and shame
  Of those that sought our causeless harm:

Thou art our life, our triumph-song,
  The joy and comfort of our heart ;
To Thee all praises do belong,
  And Thou the God of Armies art.

We must confess it is Thy power
  That made us masters of the field ;
Thou art our bulwark and our tower,
  Our rock of refuge and our shield :
Thou taught'st our hands and arms to fight ;
  With vigour Thou didst gird us round ;
Thou mad'st our foes to take their flight
  And Thou didst beat them to the ground.

With fury came our armèd foes,
  To blood and slaughter fiercely bent ;
And perils round did us enclose,
  By whatsoever way we went ;
That, hadst not Thou our Captain been,
  To lead us on, and off again,
We on the place had dead been seen,
  Or masked in blood and wounds had lain.

This song we therefore sing to Thee,
  And pray that Thou for evermore
Would'st our Protector deign to be,
  As at this time and heretofore ;
That Thy continual favour shown
  May cause us more to Thee incline,
And make it through the world be known
  That such as are our foes are Thine.

Wither's *Shepherds Hunting* appeared in 1615, *Fidelia* in 1617, *Philarete* in 1617, *Hymns and Songs of the Church* in 1623, *Hallelujah* in 1641. He is an unequal writer; but his enthusiasm, his love of nature, and his lyrical sweetness keep his verse fresh.

BROWNE

Along with Wither ought to be mentioned a contemporary poet of a genius, or at least of a manner, in some respects kindred to his, whose fate it has been to experience the same long neglect, William Browne, the author of *Britannia's Pastorals*, of which the first part was published in 1613, the second in 1616, and of *The Shepherd's Pipe* in Seven Eclogues, which appeared in 1614. Browne was a native of Tavistock in Devonshire, where he was born in 1590, and he is supposed to have died in 1645. It is remarkable that, if he lived to so late a date, he should not have written more than he appears to have done: the two parts of his *Britannia's Pastorals* were reprinted together in 1625; and a piece called *The Inner*

Temple Masque, and a few short poems, were published for the first time in an addition of his works brought out, under the care of Dr. Farmer, in 1772; but the last thirty years of his life would seem, in so far as regards original production, to have been a blank. Yet a remarkable characteristic of his style, as well as of Wither's, is its ease and fluency; and it would appear, from what he says in one of the songs of his *Pastorals*, that he had written part of that work before he was twenty. His poetry certainly does not read as if its fountain would soon run dry. His facility of rhyming and command of harmonious expression are very great; and, within their proper sphere, his invention and fancy are also extremely active and fertile. His strength, however, lies chiefly in description; of passion, or indeed of any breath of actual living humanity, his poetry has almost none. Yet, although without the versatility and vitality of Wither, Browne rivals that writer in the sweetness of his verse; and the English of the one has nearly all the purity, perspicuity, and unfading freshness of style which is so remarkable in the other. His verse is full of sweet country sights and sounds.

PROSE WRITERS.—CHARLES I.

Most of the prose that was written and published in England in the middle portion of the seventeenth century, or the twenty years preceding the Restoration, was political and theological, but very little of it has any claim to be considered as belonging to the national literature. A torrent of pamphlets and ephemeral polemics supplied the ravenous public appetite with a mental sustenance which answered the wants of the moment, much as the bakers' ovens did with daily bread for the body. It was all devoured, and meant to be devoured, as fast as it was produced —devoured in the sense of being quite used up and consumed, so far as any good was to be got out of it. It was in no respect intended for posterity, any more than the linen and broad-cloth then manufactured were intended for posterity. Still even this busy and excited time produced some literary performances which still retain more or less of interest.

The writings attributed to Charles I. were first collected and published at the Hague soon after his death, in a folio volume without date, under the title of *Reliquiæ Sacræ Carolinæ*, and twice afterwards in England, namely, in 1660 and 1687, with the title of ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΑ: *The Works of King Charles the Martyr*. If we except a number of speeches to the parliament, letters, despatches, and other political papers, the contents of this collection are all theological, consisting of prayers, arguments, and disquisitions on the controversy about church government, and the famous *Eikon Basiliké*, or, *The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings*; which, having been printed under the care of Dr. Gauden (after the Restoration successively bishop of Exeter and Worcester), had been first published by itself immediately after the king's execution. It is now generally admitted that the *Eikon* was really written by Gauden, who, after the Restoration, openly claimed it as his own. It is not improbable that the work may have been submitted to Charles's revisal, and that it may have received both his approval and his corrections. Charles, indeed, was more in the habit of correcting what had been written by others than of writing anything himself. The most important of the literary productions which are admitted to be wholly Charles's own, are his papers in the controversy which he carried on at Newcastle in June and July, 1646, with Alexander Henderson, the Scotch clergyman, on the question between episcopacy and presbytery, and those on the same subject in his controversy with the parliamentary divines at Newport in October, 1648. These papers show considerable clearness of thinking and logical or argumentative talent; but it cannot be said that they are written with any force or elegance.

MILTON'S PROSE WORKS

We have already mentioned Bishop Hall, both as a poet and as a writer of prose. A part which Hall took in his old age in the grand controversy of the time brought him into collision with one whose name in after ages the world was to resound. John Milton, then in his thirty-third year, and recently returned from his travels in France and Italy, had already, in 1641, lent he aid of his pen to the war of the Puritans against the established church by the publication of his treatise entitled *Of Reformation, in Two Books*. The same year Hall published his *Humble Remonstrance in favour of Episcopacy;* which immediately called forth an *Answer by Smectymnuus*,—a word formed from the initial letters of the names of five Puritan ministers by whom the tract was written—Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William (or, as he was on this occasion reduced to designate himself, Uuilliam) Spurstow. The *Answer* produced a *Confutation* by

Archbishop Usher; and to this Milton replied in a treatise entitled *Of Prelatical Episcopacy.* Hall then published a *Defence of the Humble Remonstrance*; and Milton wrote *Animadversions* upon that. About the same time he also brought out a performance of much greater pretension, under the title of *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty, in Two Books.* This is the work containing the magnificent passage in which he makes the announcement of his intention to attempt something in one of the highest kinds of poetry "in the mother-tongue," long afterwards accomplished in his great epic. Meanwhile a *Confutation of the Animadversions* having been published by Bishop Hall, or his son, Milton replied, in 1642, in *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, which was the last of his publications in this particular controversy. But nearly all his other prose writings were given to the world within the period with which we are now engaged:—namely, his *Tractate of Education*, addressed to his friend Hartlib, and his noble *Areopagitica, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, in 1644; his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1642, and his *Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce*, the same year; his *Tetrachordon*, and *Colasterion* (both on the same subject, in 1645; his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, his *Eikonoclastes*, in answer to the *Eikon Basilikè*, and one or two other tracts of more temporary interest, all after the execution of the king, in 1649; his *Defence for the People of England*, in answer to *Salmasius* (in Latin), in 1651; his *Second Defence* (also in Latin), in reply to a work by Peter du Moulin, 1654; two additional Latin tracts in reply to rejoinders of Du Moulin, in 1655; his treatises on *Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases*, and on *The Means of Removing Hirelings out of the Church*, in 1659; his *Letter concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth*, and *Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth*, the same year; and, finally, his *Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, in 1660, and his *Brief Notes* upon a Sermon preached by Dr. Griffith, called *The Fear of God and the King*, n the spring of 1660, immediately before the king's return. Passages of great poetic splendour occur in some of these productions, and a fervid spirit breathes in all of them, though the animation is as apt to take the tone of mere coarse abuse as of lofty and dignified scorn or of vigorous argument; but, upon the whole, it cannot be said that Milton's English prose is a good style. It is in the first place, not perhaps in vocabulary, but certainly in genius and construction, the most Latinized of English styles; but it does not merit the commendation bestowed by Pope on another style which he conceived to be formed after the model of the Roman eloquence, of being "so Latin, yet so English all the while." It is both soul and body Latin, only in an English dress. Owing partly to this principle of composition to the adoption of which his education and tastes or habits led him, partly to the character of his mind, fervid, gorgeous, and soaring, but having little impulsiveness or self-abandonment, rich as his style often is, it never moves with any degree of rapidity or easy grace even in passages where such qualities are most required, but has at all times something of a stiff, cumbrous, oppressive air. Many things, no doubt, are happily said; there is much strong and also some brilliant expression; but even such imbedded gems do not occur so often as might be looked for from so poetical a mind. In fine, we must admit the truth of what he has himself confessed—that he was not naturally disposed to "this manner of writing"; "wherein," he adds, "knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand."[1] With all his quick susceptibility for whatever was beautiful and bright, Milton seems to have needed the soothing influence of the regularity and music of verse fully to bring out his poetry, or to sublimate his imagination to the true poetical state. The passion which is an enlivening flame in his verse half suffocates him with its smoke in his prose.

HALES; CHILLINGWORTH

Two other eminent names of theological controversialists belonging to this troubled age of the English church may be mentioned together—those of John Hales and William Chillingworth. Hales, who was born in 1584, and died in 1656, the same year with Hall and Usher, published in his lifetime a few short tracts, of which the most important is a *Discourse on Schism*, which was printed in 1642, and is considered to have been one of the works that led the way in that bold revolt against the authority of the fathers, so much cried up by the preceding school of Andrews and Laud, upon which has since been founded what may hold to be the strongest defence of the Church of England against that of Rome. Al Hales' writings were collected and published after his death, in

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[1] *Reason of Church Government*, Book II.

1659, in a quarto volume, bearing the title of *Golden Remains of the Ever-Memorable Mr. John Hales*, a designation which has stuck to his name. The main idea of his treatise on Schism had, however, been much more elaborately worked out by his friend Chillingworth (1602–1644)—the immortal Chillingworth, as he is styled by his admirers—in his famous work entitled *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, published in 1637. This is one of the most closely and keenly argued polemical treatises ever written: the style in which Chillingworth presses his reasoning home is like a charge with the bayonet. He was still only in his early manhood when he produced this remarkably able work; and he died in 1644 at the age of forty-two.

JEREMY TAYLOR (1613–1667)

But the greatest name by far among the English divines of the middle of the seventeenth century is that of Jeremy Taylor. He was born in 1613, and died bishop of Down and Connor in 1667; but most of his works were written, and many of them were also published, before the Restoration. In abundance of thought; in ingenuity of argument; in opulence of imagination; in a soul made alike for the feeling of the sublime, of the beautiful, and of the picturesque; and in a style, answering in its compass, flexibility, and sweetness to the demands of all these powers, Taylor is unrivalled among the masters of English eloquence. He is the Spenser of our prose writers; and his prose is sometimes almost as musical as Spenser's verse. His sermons, like those of *Enicento*, or *Christian Year*, his *Golden Grove*, his *Holy Living* (1656), and, still more, his *Holy Dying*, all contain many passages, the beauty and splendour of which are hardly to be matched in any other English prose writer. The *Discourse of Friendship* was devised for the matchless Orinda; and his great manual of casuistry *Ductor Dubitantium* was issued in 1660. Another of his most remarkable works, *Theologia Eclectica, a Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying*, first published in 1647, may be placed beside Milton's *Areopagitica*, published three years before, as doing for liberty of conscience the same service which that did for the liberty of the press. Both remain the most eloquent and comprehensive defences we yet possess of these two great rights.

FULLER

The last of the theological writers of this era that we shall notice is Fuller. Dr. Thomas Fuller was born in 1608, and died in 1661; and in the course of his not very extended life produced a considerable number of literary works, of which his *Church History of Britain* from the Birth of Jesus Christ until the year 1648, which appeared in 1656, and his *History of the Worthies of England*, which was not published till the year after his death, are the most important (1662). His *History of the Holy Wane* appeared in 1639; his *Holy and Profane State* in 1642. He is a most singular writer, full of verbal quibbling and quaintness of all kinds, but by far the most amusing and engaging of all the rhetoricians of this school, inasmuch as his conceits are rarely mere elaborate feats of ingenuity, but are usually informed either by a strong spirit of very peculiar humour and drollery, or sometimes even by a warmth and depth of feeling, of which too, strange as it may appear, the oddity of his phraseology is a not ineffective exponent. He was certainly one of the greatest and truest wits that ever lived: he is witty not by any sort of effort at all, but because he cannot help it. But wit, or the faculty of looking at and presenting things in their less obvious relations, is accompanied in him, not only by humour and heart, but by the irradiating power of fancy. Accordingly, what he writes is always lively and interesting, and sometimes even eloquent and imaginative though the eccentricities of his characteristic manner are not favourable, it must be confessed, to sustained dignity or solemnity of style. Fuller, and it is no wonder, was one of the most popular writers of his own day: he observes himself, in the opening chapter of his *Worthies*, that hitherto no stationer (or publisher) had lost by him.

We may give a Warwickshire worthy—

Philemon Holland, where born is to me unknown, was bred in Trinity College in Cambridge a Doctor in Physic, and fixed himself in Coventry. He was the translator general in his age, so that those books alone of his turning into English will make a country gentleman a competent library for historians; in so much that one saith,

"Holland with his translations doth so fill us,
He will not let *Suetonius* be *Tranquillus*."

Indeed, some decry all translators as interlopers, spoiling the trade of learning, which should be driven amongst scholars alone.

Such also allege that the best translations are works rather of industry than judgment, and, in easy authors, of faithfulness rather than industry; that many be but bunglers, forcing the meaning of the authors they translate, "forcing the lock when they cannot open it."

But their opinion resents too much of envy, that such gentlemen who cannot repair to the fountain should be debarred access to the stream. Besides, it is unjust to charge all with the faults of some; and a distinction must be made amongst translators betwixt cobblers and workmen, and our Holland had the true *knack* of translating.

Many of these his books he wrote with one pen, whereon he himself thus pleasantly versified:—

"With one sole pen I writ this book,
Made of a grey goose quill;
A pen it was when it I took,
And a pen I leave it still."

This monumental pen he solemnly kept, and showed to my reverend tutor, Doctor Samuel Ward. It seems he leaned very lightly on the neb thereof, though weightily enough in another sense, performing not slightly but solidly what he undertook.

But what commendeth him most to the praise of posterity is his translating *Camden's Britannia*, a translation more than a translation, with many excellent additions not found in the Latin, done fifty years since in Master Camden's lifetime, not only with his knowledge and consent, but also, no doubt, by his desire and help. Yet such additions (discoverable in the former part with asterisks in the margent) with some antiquaries obtain not equal authenticalness with the rest. This eminent translator was translated to a better life anno Domini 16 . . .

The translation of the translator took place in fact in 1636, when he had reached the venerable age of eighty-five, so that translating would seem to be not an unhealthy occupation. The above sketch is Fuller all over, in heart as well as in head and hand—the last touch especially, which, jest though it be, and upon a solemn subject, falls as gently and kindly as a tear on good old Philemon and his labours. We seem to be told that even so gently fell the touch of death itself upon the ripe old man. And Fuller's wit and jesting are always of this character; they have not in them a particle either of bitterness or of irreverence. No man ever (in writing at least) made so many jokes, good, bad, and indifferent; be the subject what it may, it does not matter; in season and out of season he is equally facetious; he cannot let slip an occasion of saying a good thing any more than a man who is tripped can keep himself from falling; the habit is as irresistible with him as the habit of breathing; and yet there is probably neither an ill-natured nor a profane witticism to be found in all that he has written. It is the sweetest-blooded wit that was ever infused into man or book. And how strong and weighty, as well as how gentle and beautiful, much of his writing is! The work perhaps in which he is oftenest eloquent and pathetic is that entitled, *The Holy State and the Profane State.* Almost no writer tells a story so well as Fuller—with so much life and point and gusto.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605–1682)

Another of the most original and peculiar writers of the middle portion of the seventeeth century is Sir Thomas Browne, the celebrated author of the *Religio Medici*, published in 1642; the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*, in 1658; and the *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns found in Norfolk*; and the *Garden of Cyrus, or the Quincuncial Lozenge, or Network Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered*, which appeared together in 1658. *Christian Morals* was a posthumous volume. Browne died in 1682, at the age of seventy-seven; but he published nothing after the Restoration, though some additional tracts found among his papers were given to the world after his death. The writings of Sir Thomas Browne, to be rightly appreciated, must of course be read in the spirit suited to the rare kind of literature to which they belong. A single and famous example of his style must suffice to show the quality of his pages:—

AMBITION *v.* OBLIVION

What songs the sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarianism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators. Had they made as good provision for their names as they have done for their relics, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which, in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and

> only arise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vainglory and maddening vices. Pagan vainglories, which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no Atropos unto the immortality of their names, were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vainglories, who, acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already outlasted their monuments and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias ; and Charles V. can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.
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> And therefore restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations, seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons ; one face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. It is too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations, in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We, whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations ; and being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that is past a moment.

Browne's works, we have to admit, with all their varied learning, contain very little of direct moral or economical counsel by which any one can greatly profit ; very little, in short, of anything that will either put money in a man's pocket, or actual knowledge in his head. Assuredly the interest with which they were perused, and the charm that they exercised, could not at any time have been due, except in very small part indeed, to the estimation in which their readers held such pieces of intelligence as that the phœnix is but a fable of the poets, and that the griffin exists only in the zoology of the heralds. What he writes is not to be considered solely or even principally with reference to its absolute truth or falsehood, but rather with reference to its relative truth and significance as an expression of some feeling or notion or other idiosyncrasy of the very singular and interesting mind from which it has proceeded. Read in this spirit, the works of Sir Thomas Browne, more especially his *Religio Medici*, and his *Urn Burial*, will be found among the richest in our literature—full of uncommon thoughts, and trains of meditation leading far away into the dimmest inner chambers of life and death—and also of an eloquence, sometimes fantastic, but always striking, not seldom pathetic, and in its greatest passages gorgeous with the emblazonry of a warm imagination. Out of such a writer the rightly attuned and sympathizing mind will draw many things more precious than any mere facts.[1]

SIR JAMES HARRINGTON

We can merely mention Sir James Harrington's political romance entitled *Oceana*, which was published in 1656. Harrington's leading principles are, that the natural element of power in states is property; and that, of all kinds of property, that in land is the most important, possessing, indeed, certain characteristics which distinguish it, in its natural and political action, from all other property. "In general," observes Hallam, "it may be said of Harrington that he is prolix, dull, pedantic, yet seldom profound; but sometimes redeems himself by just observations."[2] This is true in so far as respects the style of the *Oceana*; but it hardly does justice to the ingenuity, the truth, and the importance of certain of Harrington's views and deductions in the philosophy of politics. If he has not the merit of absolute originality in his main propositions, they had at least never been so clearly expounded and demonstrated by any preceding writer.

NEWSPAPERS

It has been satisfactorily shown that the three newspapers, entitled *The English Mercurie*, Nos. 50, 51, and 54, preserved among Dr. Birch's historical collections in the British Museum, professing to be "published by authority, for the contradiction of false reports," at the time of the attack of the Spanish Armada, on the credit of which the invention of newspapers used to be attributed to Lord Burleigh, are modern forgeries—*jeux d'esprit*, in fact, of the reverend Doctor.[3] Occasional pamphlets, containing foreign news, were published in England towards the close of the reign of James I. The earliest is entitled *News out of Holland*, dated 1619; and other similar papers of news from different foreign countries are extant which appeared in 1620, 1621, and 1622. The first of these news-pamphlets which came out at regular intervals appears to have been that entitled *The News of the Present Week*, edited by Nathaniel Butler, which was started in 1622, in the early days of the Thirty Years' War, and was continued, in conformity with its title, as a weekly publication. But the proper era of English newspapers, at least of those containing domestic intelligence, commences with the Long Parliament. The earliest that has been discovered is a quarto pamphlet of a few leaves, entitled "The Diurnal Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of both Houses, in this great and happy parliament, from the 3rd of November, 1640, to the 3rd of November, 1641; London, printed for William Cooke, and are to be sold at his shop at Furnival's Inn Gate, in Holborn, 1641."[1] More than a hundred newspapers, with different titles, appear to have been published between this date and the death of the king, and upwards of eighty others between that event and the Restoration.[2] "When hostilities commenced," says the writer from whom we derive this information, "every event, during a most eventful period, had its own historian, who communicated *News* from *Hull*, *Truths* from *York*, *Warranted Tidings* from *Ireland*, and *Special Passages* from *several places*. These were all occasional papers. Impatient, however, as a distracted people were for information, the news was never distributed daily. The various newspapers were published weekly at first; but in the progress of events, and the ardour of curiosity, they were distributed twice or thrice in every week.[3] Such were the *French Intelligencer*, the *Dutch Spy*, the *Irish Mercury*, and the *Scots Dove*, the *Parliament Kite*, and the *Secret Owl*. *Mercurius Acheronticus* brought them hebdomadal *News from Hell*; *Mercurius Democritus* communicated wonderful news from the World in the Moon; the *Laughing Mercury* gave perfect news from the Antipodes; and *Mercurius Mastix* faithfully lashed all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and other Intelligencers."[4] The great political and religious questions of the time were also debated, as already mentioned, in a prodigious multitude of separate pamphlets, which appear to have been read quite as universally and as eagerly. Of such pamphlets printed in the twenty years from the meeting of the Long Parliament to the Restoration there are still preserved in the British Museum, forming the collection called the King's Pamphlets, no fewer than thirty thousand, which would give a rate of four or five new ones every day.

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[1] *Lit. of Eur.*, iii. 153.

[2] *Id.*, iv. 200.

[3] See *A Letter to Antonio Panizzi, Esq.* By Thomas Watts, of the British Museum. 8vo. Lond. 1839.

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[1] See Chronological List of Newspapers from the Epoch of the Civil Wars, in Chalmers's *Life of Ruddiman*, pp. 404–442.

[2] See Chalmers's *Life of Ruddiman*, p. 114.

[3] In December, 1642, however, Spalding, the Aberdeen annalist, in a passage which Mr. Chalmers has quoted, tells us that "now printed papers *daily* came from London, called *Diurnal Occurrences*, declaring what is done in parliament."—Vol. i. p. 336.

[4] Chalmers, p. 116.

Where our modern newspapers begin, the series of our old chroniclers closes with Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, written while its author was confined for debt in the Fleet Prison, where he died in 1645, and first published in a folio volume in 1641. It was several times reprinted, and was a great favourite with our ancestors for two or three succeeding generations; but it has now lost all interest, except for a few passages relating to the author's own time. Baker, however, himself declares it to be compiled "with so great care and diligence, that, if all others were lost, this only will be sufficient to inform posterity of all passages memorable or worthy to be known." Sir Richard and his Chronicle are now popularly remembered principally as the trusted historical guides and authorities of Addison's incomparable Sir Roger de Coverley.[1]

RETROSPECT OF THE COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE

It thus appears that the age of the Civil War and the Commonwealth does not present an absolute blank in the history of our highest literature; but, if we accept the *Areopagitica* of Milton, the *Liberty of Prophesying*, and a few other controversial or theological treatises of Jeremy Taylor, some publications by Fuller, and the successive apocalypses of the imperturbable dreamer of Norwich, no work of genius of the first class appeared in England in the twenty years from the meeting of the Long Parliament to the Restoration. It was a time when men wrote and thought, as they acted, merely for the passing moment. The unprinted plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, indeed, were now sent to the press, as well as other dramatic works written in the last age; the theatres, by which they used to be published in another way, being shut up—a significant intimation that the great age of the drama was at an end. A new play continued to drop occasionally from the commonplace pen of Shirley—almost the solitary successor of the Shakespeares, the Fletchers, the Jonsons, the Massingers, the Fords, and the rest of that bright throng. All other poetry, as well as dramatic poetry, was nearly silent—hushed partly by the din of arms and of theological and political strife, more by the frown of triumphant puritanism. It is observable that even the confusion of the contest that lasted till after the king's death did not so completely banish the Muses, or drown their voice, as did the grim tranquillity under the sway of the parliament that followed. The time of the war, besides the treatises just alluded to of Milton, Taylor, Fuller, and Browne, produced the *Cooper's Hill*, and some other poetical pieces, by Denham, and the republication of the *Comus* and other early poems of Milton; the collection of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, and Cowley's volume entitled *The Mistress*, appeared in 1647, in the short interval of doubtful quiet between the first and the second war; the volume of Herrick's poetry was published the next year, while the second war was still raging, or immediately after its close; Lovelace's first volume, in 1649, probably before the execution of the king. Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and one or two other treatises of his, all written some time before, were printed at London in 1650 and 1651, while the author was resident in Paris. For some years from this date the blank is nearly absolute. Then, when the more liberal despotism of Cromwell had displaced the Presbyterian moroseness of the parliament, we have Fuller's *Church History*, printed in 1655; Harrington's *Oceana*, and the collection of Cowley's poetry, in 1656; Browne's *Hydriotaphia* and *Garden of Cyrus*, in 1658; Lovelace's second volume, and Hales's *Remains*, in 1659; together with two or three philosophical publications by Hobbes, and a few short pieces in verse by Waller, of which the most famous is his *Panegyric on Oliver Cromwell*, written after the Protector's death, an occasion which also afforded its first considerable theme to the ripening genius of Dryden. It is to be noted, moreover, that, with one illustrious exception, none of the writers that have been named belonged to the prevailing faction. If Waller and Dryden took that side in their verses for a moment, it must be admitted that they both amply made up for their brief conformity; Denham, Browne, Taylor, Herrick, Lovelace, Fuller, Hales, Hobbes, Cowley, were all consistent, most of them ardent, royalists; Harrington was a theoretical republican, but even he was a royalist by personal attachments; Milton alone was in life and heart a Commonwealth man and a Cromwellian.

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[1] See *Spectator*, No. 329.

POETRY OF MILTON

From the appearance of his minor poems, in 1645, Milton had published no poetry, with the exception of a sonnet to Henry Lawes, the musician, prefixed to a collection of Psalm tunes by that composer in 1648, till he gave to the world his *Paradise Lost*, in Ten Books, in 1667. In 1671 appeared his *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*; in 1673 a new edition of his minor poems, with nine new sonnets and other additions; and in 1674, what is properly the second edition of the *Paradise Lost*, now distributed (by the bisection of the seventh and tenth) into twelve books. He died on Sunday the 8th of November, in that year, when within about a month of completing the sixty-sixth year of his age. His prose writings have been already noticed. Verse, however, was the form in which his genius had earliest expressed itself, and also that in which he had first come forth as an author. Passing over his paraphrases of one or two Psalms, done at a still earlier age, we have abundant promise of the future great poet in his lines *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, beginning,

> "O fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,"

written in his seventeenth year; and still more in the *College Exercise*, written in his nineteenth year.

This was written in 1627. Fourteen years later, after his return from Italy, where some of his juvenile Latin compositions, and some others in the same language, which, as he tells us, he "had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps." Assenting in so far to these commendations, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon him, he had ventured to indulge the hope that, by labour and study—"which I take," he nobly says, "to be my portion in this life"—joined with the strong propensity of nature, he "might perhaps leave something so written in after-times as they should not willingly let it die"—he continued still inclined to fix all the industry and art he could unite to the adorning of his native tongue—or, as he goes on to say, "to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens, throughout this island, in the mother-dialect;—that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a

Christian, might do for mine: not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world." He again, more distinctly than before, though still only in general expressions, announced the great design, "of highest hope and hardest attempting," which he proposed to himself one day to accomplish—whether in the epic form, as exemplified by Homer, Virgil, and Tasso, or after the dramatic, "wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign"—or in the style of "those magnific odes and hymns" of Pindarus and Callimachus; not forgetting that of all these kinds of writing the highest models are to be found in the Holy Scriptures—in the Book of Job, in the Song of Solomon and the Apocalypse of St. John, in the frequent songs interspersed throughout the Law and the Prophets. "The thing which I had to say," concluded this remarkable announcement, "and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelaty, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted; as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her Siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim, with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs. Till which in some measure be accomplished, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard as much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them."

Before this, there had appeared of Milton's poetry only his

Nativity Ode, his *Comus*, and *Lycidas*; the second in 1637, the last with some other Cambridge verses on the same occasion, the loss at sea of his friend Edward King, in 1638; but, besides some of his sonnets and other minor pieces, he had also written the fragment entitled *Arcades*, and the two companion poems the *L'Allegro* and the *Il Penseroso*. These poems already attested the worthy successor of the greatest writers of English verse in the preceding age—recalling the imagination and the melody of the minor poems of Spenser and Shakespeare. These revealed him as a builder of great metrical harmonies, a consummate imager, and a delicate alchemist of language. In the case of Milton, his first published poem and earliest poetical attempt of any considerable extent, although in the dramatic form, affords abundant evidence that his genius was not dramatic. His verse flows on in a continued stream of fancy and melody; but there is no dialogue, properly so called, no replication of diverse emotions or natures; it is Milton alone who sings or declaims all the while,—sometimes of course on one side of the argument, sometimes on the other, and not, it may be, without changing his attitude and the tone of his voice, but still speaking only from one head, from one heart, from one ever-present and ever-dominant constitution of being. And from this imprisonment within himself Milton never escapes, either in his dramatic or in his other poetry; it is the characteristic which distinguishes him not only from our great dramatists, but also from other great epic and narrative poets. His poetry has been sometimes described as to an unusual degree wanting in the expression of his own personal feelings; and, notwithstanding some remarkable instances of exception, not only in his minor pieces, but in his great epic, the remark is true in a certain sense. He is no habitual brooder over his own emotions, no self-dissector, no systematic resorter for inspiration to the accidents of his own personal history. His subject in some degree forbade this; his proud and lofty nature still more withheld him from it. But, although disdaining thus to picture himself at full length either for our pity or admiration, he has yet impressed the stamp of his own individuality—of his own character, moral as well as intellectual—as deep on all he has written as if his theme had been ever so directly himself. Compare him in this respect with Homer. We scarcely conceive of the old Greek poet as having a sentient existence at all, any more than we do of the sea or the breezes of heaven, whose music his continuous, undulating verse, ever various, ever the same, resembles. Who in the delineation of the wrath of Achilles finds a trace of the temper or character of the delineator? Who in Milton's Satan does not recognize much of Milton himself? But, although the spirit of his poetry is thus essentially egoistic, the range of his poetic power is not thereby confined within narrow limits. He had not the "myriad-minded" nature of Shakespeare—the all-penetrating sympathy by which the greatest of dramatists could transform himself for the time into any one of the other existences around him, no matter how high, no matter how low. Anything of this kind he could scarcely have performed much better than the most ordinarily gifted of the sons of men; he had no more the wit or humour requisite for it than he had the power of intense and universal sympathy. But his proper region was still a vast one; and there, his vision, though always coloured by his own passions and opinions, was, notwithstanding, both as far reaching and as searching as any poet's ever was. His poetry has a composite charm: his style is a synthesis of beautiful traditions. Conversant as he was with the language and literature of Italy, his poetry probably acquired what it has of Italian in its character principally through the medium of the elder poets of his own country; and it is, accordingly, still more English than Italian. Much of its inner spirit, and something also of its outward fashion, is of Hebrew derivation: it may be affirmed that from the fountain of no other foreign literature did Milton drink with so much eagerness as from this, and that by no other was his genius so much nourished and strengthened. Not a little, also, one so accomplished in the lore of classic antiquity must needs have acquired from that source; the tones of the poetry of Greece and Rome are heard more or less audibly everywhere in that of the great epic poet of England. The First Book of *Paradise Lost* is probably among the most splendid and perfect of human compositions; and the Fourth is as distinguished for grace and luxuriance as that is for magnificence of imagination. And, though these are perhaps the two greatest books in the poem, taken each as a whole, there are passages in every one of the other books equal or almost equal to the finest in these. And worthy of the thoughts that breathe are the words that burn. The mature Miltonic style, mannered but splendid, is inimitable. Finally, Milton's blank verse, both for its rich and varied music and its exquisite adaptation, would in itself almost deserve to be styled poetry, without the words: alone of all our poets, before or since, he has brought out the full capabilities of the language in that form of metre. Indeed, putting aside the drama, he is still our only great blank verse writer.

It is natural, in comparing, or contrasting, Milton's *Paradise Lost* with his *Paradise Regained*, to think of the two great Homeric epics. It has been common accordingly to apply to the case of the English poet also the famous similitude of Longinus, and to say that in the *Paradise Regained*, as in the *Odyssey*, we have the sun on his descent, the same indeed as ever in majesty (τὸ μέγεθος), but deprived of his overpowering ardour (δίχα τῆς σφοδρότητος).

But surely the comparison which the companionship or sequence of the two Miltonic epics most forcibly suggests to a true feeling of both their resemblance and their difference, and of the prevailing spirit that animates each, is that of the Old and the New Testament. The one is distinctively Hebrew, the other as distinctively Christian. With much in common, they have also, like the two religions, and the two collections of sacred books, much in which they are unlike, and in a certain sense opposed to one another, both in manner and in sentiment. The poetry of the *Paradise Lost*, all life and movement, is to that of the *Paradise Regained* what a conflagration is to a sunlit landscape. In the one we have the grandeur of the old worship, in the other the simplicity of the new. The one addresses itself more to the sense, the other to the understanding. In respect of force or of variety, of intense and burning passion or of imaginative power mingling and blending all the wonders of brightness and gloom, there can be no comparison between them. We observe a growing rigidity, a sterner distrust of the sensuous appeal. Even the argumentative eloquence, of which it is chiefly made up, brilliant as it is, is far from being equal to the best of that in the *Paradise Lost*. It has the same ingenuity and logic, with as much, or perhaps even more, concentration in the expression; but, unavoidably, it may be, from the circumstances of the case, it has not either the same glow and splendour or even the same tone of real feeling. The fallen spirits thronging Pandemonium, or stretched on the burning lake before that gorgeous pile "rose like an exhalation," consult and debate, in their misery and anxious perplexity, with an accent of human earnestness which it was impossible to give either to the conscious sophistry of their chief in that other scene or to the wisdom more than human by which he is refuted and repelled.

It is commonly said that Milton himself professed to prefer the *Paradise Regained* to the *Paradise Lost.* Whatever may be the fact as to his alleged preference of the *Paradise Regained* to the *Paradise Lost*, Milton has, at any rate, pronounced judgment in a sufficiently decisive and uncompromising way upon another point in regard to which both these works stand contrasted with much of his earlier poetry. We refer to his vehement denunciation, in a notice prefixed to the *Paradise Lost*,[1] of rhyme as being, in all circumstances, for he makes no exception, "a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight," and as having no claim to be regarded as anything else than the barbarous invention of a barbarous age, and a mere jingle and life-repressing bondage. We certainly rejoice that the *Paradise Lost* is not written in rhyme; but we are very glad that these strong views were not taken up by the great poet till after he had produced his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, his *Lycidas* and his *Sonnets*. *Samson Agonistes* brings Milton to his final stage of rigid and statuesque sublimity, of a poetry in which the beauty chiefly consists in the architecture of the choruses and the stern strength of the ethical appeal.

COWLEY (1618–1667)

The poetry of Milton, though principally produced after the Restoration, belongs in everything but in date to the preceding age; and this is also nearly as true of that of Cowley. Abraham Cowley, born in London in 1618, published his first volume of verse, under the title of *Poetic Blossoms*, in 1633, when he was yet only a boy of fifteen: one piece contained in this publication, indeed—*The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe*—was written when he was only in his tenth year. The four books of his unfinished epic entitled *Davideis* were mostly written while he was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. His pastoral drama of *Love's Riddle*, and his Latin comedy called *Naufragium Joculare*, were both published in 1638. In 1647 appeared his collection of amatory poems entitled *The Mistress*, and in 1653 his comedy of *The Guardian*, afterwards altered, and re-published as *The Cutter of Coleman Street.* After the Restoration he collected such of his pieces as he thought worth preserving, and re-published them, together with some additional productions, of which the most important were his *Davideis*, and his *Pindaric Odes*.

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[1] This notice, commonly headed *The Verse* in modern editions of the poem, is found in three of the five various forms of the first edition (1667, 1668, and 1669), and there bears the superscription *The Printer to the Reader*; but there can be no doubt that it is Milton's own.

Few poets have been more popular, or more praised, in their own time than Cowley. Milton is said to have declared that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley; though it does not follow that he held all three to be equally great. Sir John Denham, in some verses on Cowley's Death and Burial on the 3rd of August, 1667, in Westminster Abbey, sets him above all the English poets that had gone before him, and prophesies that posterity will hold him to have been equalled by Virgil alone among those of antiquity. For a long time, too, his works appear to have been more generally read than those of any other English poet, if a judgment may be formed from the frequency with which they were reprinted, and the numerous copies of them in various forms that still exist.[1] Cowley has been classed with Donne among the Metaphysical Poets. With the same general characteristics of manner, he is somewhat less forced and fantastical, a good deal less daring in every way, but unfortunately also infinitely less poetical. His imagination is tinsel, or mere surface gilding, compared to Donne's solid gold; his wit little better than word-catching, to the profound meditative quaintness of the elder poet; and of passion, with which all Donne's finest lines are tremulous, Cowley has none. Considerable grace and dignity occasionally distinguish his *Pindaric Odes* (which, however, are Pindaric only in name); and he has shown much elegant playfulness of style and fancy in his translations from and imitations of Anacreon, and in some other verses written in the same manner. As for what he intends for love verses, some of them are pretty enough frost-work; but the only sort of love there is in them is the love of point and sparkle. But in verses like the *Elegy on William Harvey* he is not without dignity and serenity.

BUTLER

This manner of writing is more fitly applied by another celebrated poet of the same date, Samuel Butler, the immortal author of *Hudibras*. Butler (b. 1612, d. 1759) is said to have written most of his great poem during the interregnum; but the first part or it was not published till 1663. The quantity of explosive matter of all kinds which Butler has contrived to pack up in his verses is amazing; it is crack upon crack, flash upon flash, from the first line of his long poem to the last. Much of this incessant bedazzlement is, of course, merely verbal, of the humblest species of wit; but an infinite number of the happiest things are also thrown out. And *Hudibras* is far from being all mere broad farce. Butler's power of arguing in verse, in his own way, may almost be put on a par with Dryden's in his; and perseveringly as he devotes himself upon system to the exhibition of the ludicrous and grotesque, he sometimes surprises us with a sudden gleam of the truest beauty of thought and expression breaking out from the midst of the usual rattling fire of smartnesses and conundrums—as when in one place he exclaims of a thin cloud drawn over the moon:—

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[1] A twelfth edition of the collection formed by Cowley himself was published by Tonson in 1721.

Mysterious veil; of brightness made,
At once her lustre and her shade!

He must also be allowed to tell his story and to draw his characters well, independently of his criticisms.

WALLER (1605–1687)

The most celebrated among the minor poets of the period between the Restoration and the Revolution was Waller. Edmund Waller, born in 1605, had, in point of fact, announced himself as a writer of verse before the close of the reign of James I., by his lines on the escape of Prince Charles at the Port of San Andero, in the Bay of Biscay, on his return from Spain, in September, 1623; and he continued to write till after the accession of James II., in whose reign he died, in the year 1687. His last production was the little poem concluding with one of his best-known passages:—

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home:
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

Fenton, his editor, tells us that a number of poems on religious subjects, to which these verses refer, were mostly written when he was about [above?] eighty years old; and he has himself intimated that his bodily faculties were now almost gone:—

When we for age could neither read nor write,
The subject made us able to indite.

Waller, therefore, as well as Milton, Cowley, and Butler, may be considered to have formed his manner in the last age; but his poetry does not belong to the old English school even so much as that of either Butler or Cowley. Waller is always perfectly master of himself, and idolizes his mistress with quite as much coolness and self-possession as he flatters his prince. But, although cold and unaffecting at all times, he occasionally rises to dignity of thought and manner. His panegyric on Cromwell, the offering of his gratitude to the Protector for the permission granted to him of returning to England after ten years' exile, is one of the most graceful pieces of adulation ever offered by poetry to power; and the poet is here probably more sincere than in most of his effusions, for the occasion was one on which he was likely to be moved to more than usual earnestness of feeling. A few years after he welcomed Charles II. on his restoration to the throne of his ancestors in another poem, which has been generally considered a much less spirited composition. Fenton accounts for the falling off by the author's advance in the meanwhile from his forty-ninth to his fifty-fifth year—"from which time," he observes, "his genius began to decline apace from its meridian:" but the poet himself assigned another reason: —when Charles frankly told him that he thought his own panegyric much inferior to Cromwell's, "Sir," replied Waller, "we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as in fiction." Perhaps the true reason, after all, might be that his majesty's return to England was not quite so exciting a subject to Mr. Waller's muse as his own return had been.

Waller undoubtedly possessed a charming lyric style, but his historical importance lies in his popularizing of the "new style" of verse which was really necessary to purify the art from the outworn extragances of the last Elizabethans. He introduced the school of "commonsense" and the couplet. Verse began to be merely a passionless and well-bred way of conveying facts and "criticism of life" in the heroic couplet perfected by Pope. The *Cooper's Hill* of Sir John Denham (1615–1669) was one of the earliest essays in the easy pointed style. In Waller something of the romantic grace of Carew and Lovelace lingers, and if he is "smooth," consciously smooth, songs like *On a Girdle* and *Go, Lovely Rose*, have yet a lyric perfection of their own.

MARVEL (1621–1678)

The chief writer of verse on the popular side after the Restoration was Andrew Marvel, the noble-minded member for Hull, the friend of Milton, and, in that age of brilliant profligacy, renowned alike as the first of patriots and of wits. Marvel, the son of the Rev. Andrew Marvel, master of the grammar-school at Hull, was born there in 1621, and died in 1678. His poetical genius has scarcely had justice done to it. He is the author of a number of satires in verse, in which a rich vein of vigorous, though often coarse, humour runs through a careless, extemporaneous style, which did prodigious execution in the party warfare of the day; but some of his other poetry, mostly perhaps written in the earlier part of his life, is eminent both for the delicate bloom of the emotion and for grace of form. His *Song of the Exiles*, beginning "Where the remote Bermudas ride," is a masterpiece of melody, picturesqueness, and sentiment, nearly without a flaw, and is familiar to every lover of poetry. The following verses, which are less known, are exquisitely elegant and tuneful. They are entitled *The Picture of T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers*:—

See with what simplicity
This nymph begins her golden days!
In the green grass she loves to lie,
And there with her fair aspect tames
The wilder flowers, and gives them names;
But only with the roses plays,
And them does tell
What colour best becomes them, and what smell.

Who can foretell for what high cause
This darling of the gods was born?
See this is she whose chaster laws
The wanton Love shall one day fear,
And, under her command severe,
See his bow broke and ensigns torn.
Happy who can
Appease this virtuous enemy of man!

O then let me in time compound,
And parley with those conquering eyes;
Ere they have tried their force to wound,
Ere with their glancing wheels they drive
In triumph over hearts that strive,
And them that yield but more despise.
Let me be laid
Where I may see the glory from some shade.

Meantime, whilst every verdant thing
Itself does at thy beauty charm,[1]
Reform the errors of the spring:
Make that the tulips may have share

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[1] *Charm itself*, that is, delight itself.

Of sweetness, seeing they are fair ;
And roses of their thorns disarm :
But most procure
That violets may a longer age endure.

But oh, young beauty of the woods,
Whom nature courts with fruits and flowers,
Gather the flowers, but spare the buds ;
Lest Flora, angry at thy crime
To kill her infants in their prime,
Should quickly make the example yours ;
And, ere we see,
Nip in the blossom all our hopes in thee.

Certainly neither Carew, nor Waller, nor any other court poet of that day, has produced anything in the same style finer than these lines. But Marvel's more elaborate poetry is not confined to love songs and other such light exercises of an ingenious and elegant fancy. Witness his verses on Milton's *Paradise Lost*—" When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold "—which have great dignity and strength.

His *Horatian Ode on the Return of Cromwell* has much sweetness of temper and subtlety of phrase ; and his garden-verse is rich with the flowery odours of Nature.

OTHER MINOR POETS

Of the other minor poets of this date we shall only mention the names of a few of the most distinguished. Many of the fine gentlemen and notable rakes of the Restoration were admirable song writers. Sir Charles Sedley has great gaiety and sprightliness of fancy, and an answering liveliness and at the same time courtly ease and elegance of diction. His contemporary, the Duke of Buckingham (Villiers) used to call his exquisite art of expression "Sedley's witchcraft." Sedley's genius early ripened and bore fruit : he was born only two or three years before the breaking out of the Civil War ; and he was in high reputation as a poet and a wit within six or seven years after the Restoration. He survived both the Revolution and the century, dying in the year 1701. Sedley's fellow debauchee, the celebrated Earl of Rochester (Wilmot)—although the brutal grossness of the greater part of his verse has deservedly made it and its author infamous—was perhaps a still greater genius. There is immense strength and pregnancy of expression in some of the best of his lyrics, careless and unfinished as they are. Rochester had not completed his thirty-third year when he died in July, 1680. Of the poetical productions of the other court wits of Charles's reign the principal are, the Duke of Buckingham's satirical comedy of the *Rehearsal*, which was very effective when first produced, and which still enjoys a great reputation ; the Earl of Roscommon's very commonplace *Essay on Translated Verse*; and the Earl of Dorset's lively and well-known song, *To all you ladies now on land*, written at sea the night before the engagement with the Dutch on the 3rd of June, 1665, or rather professing to have been then written, for the asserted poetic tranquillity of the noble author in expectation of the morrow's fight has been disputed. The Marquis of Halifax and Lord Godolphin were also writers of verse at this date; Etherege and Aphra Behn also composed some fine lyric verse. Among the minor poets of the time, however, we ought not to forget Charles Cotton, best known for his humorous, though somewhat coarse, travesties of *Virgil* and *Lucian*, and for his continuation of Izaak Walton's *Treatise on Angling*, and his fine idiomatic translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, but also the author of some short original pieces in verse, of much fancy and liveliness. One entitled an *Ode to Winter*, in particular, has been highly praised by Wordsworth. Sir William Davenant's *Gondibert* and Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida* were curious experiments in dramatic verse.

DRYDEN

By far the most illustrious name among the English poets of the latter half of the seventeenth century—if we exclude Milton as belonging properly to the preceding age—is that of John Dryden. Born in 1632, Dryden produced his first known composition in verse in 1649, his lines on the death of Lord Hastings, a young nobleman of great promise, who was suddenly cut off by small-pox, on the eve of his intended marriage, in that year. This earliest of Dryden's poems is in the most ambitious style of the school of Donne and Cowley : Donne himself, indeed, has scarcely penned anything quite so extravagant as one passage, in which the fancy of the young poet runs riot among the phenomena of the loathsome disease to which Lord Hastings had fallen a victim. Perhaps, on comparing his imitation with Donne's own poetry, so instinct with tenderness and passion, Dryden may have seen or felt that his own wanted the very quality which was the light and life of that of his master; at any rate, wiser than Cowley, who had the same reason for shunning a competition with Donne, he abandoned this style with his first attempt, and, indeed, for anything that appears, gave up the writing of poetry for some years altogether. His next verses of any consequence are dated nine years later, —his *Heroic Stanzas on the death of Oliver Cromwell*,—and, destitute as they are of the vigorous conception and full and easy flow of versification which he afterwards attained, they are free from any trace of the elaborate and grotesque absurdity of the Elegy on Lord Hastings. His *Astræa Redux*, or poem on the return of the king, produced two years after, evinces a growing freedom and command of style. But it is in his *Annus Mirabilis*, written in 1666, that his genius breaks forth for the first time with any promise of that full effulgence at which it ultimately arrived; here, in spite of the incumbrance of a stanza (the quatrain of alternately rhyming heroics) which he afterwards wisely exchanged for a more manageable kind of verse, we have much both of the nervous diction and energetic metre which characterize his latest and best works. From this date to the end of his days Dryden's life was one long literary labour; eight original poems of considerable length, many shorter pieces, twenty-eight dramas, and several volumes of poetical translation from Chaucer, Boccaccio, Ovid, Theocritus, Lucretius, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, and Virgil, together with numerous discourses in prose, some of them very long and elaborate, attest the industry as well as the fertility of a mind which so much toil was so far from exhausting, that his powers continued not only to exert themselves with unimpaired elasticity, but to grow stronger and brighter, to the last. His real power revealed itself in the great verse-satires of *The Medal*, 1682; *Macflecknoe*, 1682; and *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1682. *Religio Laici* and the *Hind and the Panther* are well-sustained arguments in defence, firstly of the Anglican, secondly of the Roman Church. Dryden also composed a mass of romantic plays in verse, of which the best known are *Aurungzebe* and the *Conquest of Granada*. His *Wild Gallant* was his contribution to the new school of malicious and reckless comedy. The genius of Dryden certainly did not, as that of Waller is said to have done, begin "to decline apace from its meridian" after he had reached his fifty-fifth year. His famous *Alexander's Feast* and his *Fables*, which are among his liveliest performances, were the last he produced, and were published together in the year 1700, only a few months before his death, at the age of sixty-eight.

Dryden has commonly been considered to have founded a new school of English poetry; but perhaps it would be more strictly correct to regard him as having only carried to higher perfection—perhaps to the highest to which it has yet been brought—a style of poetry which had been cultivated long before his day. The satires of Hall and of Marston, and also the *Nosce Teipsum* of Sir John Davies, all published before the end of the sixteenth century, not to refer to other less eminent examples, are heralds of his poetry. It is a school very distinguishable from that to which Milton and the greatest of our elder poets belong, deriving its spirit and character, as it does, chiefly from a certain conception of the ancient Roman classic poetry. The one therefore may be called, for convenience, the classic, the other the romantic school of poetry. But it seems to be a mistake to assume that the former first arose in England after the Restoration, under the influence of the imitation of the French, which then became fashionable; the most that can be said is, that the French taste which then became prevalent among us may have encouraged its revival; for undoubtedly what has been called the classic school of poetry had been cultivated by English writers at a much earlier date; nor is there any reason to suppose that the example of the modern poetry of France had had any great share in originally turning our own into that channel. Dryden's poetry, unlike as it is to that of Milton or Spenser, has still a thoroughly English character—an English force and heartiness, and, with all its pseudo-classicality, not a little even of the freedom and luxuriance of the more genuine English style. Smooth Waller, who preceded him, may have learned something from the modern French poets; and so may Pope, who came after him; but Dryden's fiery energy and "full-resounding line" have little in common with them in spirit or manner. He has still a strain of the heroic temper of the age preceding that of common-sense. "There was little enough of the godlike in Dryden's composition; but once more what a man was this giant, and what a giant was this man." Without either creative imagination or any power of pathos, he is in argument, in satire, and in declamatory magnificence, the greatest of our poets. His poetry, indeed, is not the highest kind of poetry, but in that kind he stands unrivalled and unapproached. Pope, his great disciple, who, in correctness, in neatness, and in the brilliancy of epigrammatic point, has outshone his master, has not come near him in easy flexible vigour, in indignant vehemence, in narrative rapidity, any more than he has in sweep and variety of versification. Dryden never writes coldly, or timidly, or drowsily. The movement of verse always sets him on fire, and whatever he produces is a coinage hot from the brain, not slowly scraped or pinched into shape, but struck out as from a die with a few stout blows or a single wrench of the screw. It is this fervour especially which gives to his personal sketches their wonderful life and force: his *Absalom and Achitophel* is the noblest portrait-gallery in poetry.

DRYDEN'S PROSE

By his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* and his various prefaces, Dryden may be said to have set a new standard in prose, even more certainly than by his poems he affected English verse. The ease and certainty of his prose-style can best be judged by a passage upon his own translation of Virgil:—

> What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me, by the lying character which has been given them of my morals. Yet, steady to my principles, and not dispirited with my afflictions, I have, by the blessing of God on my endeavours, overcome all difficulties, and in some measure acquitted myself of the debt which I owed the public when I undertook this work. In the first place, therefore, I thankfully acknowledge to the Almighty Power the assistance he has given me in the beginning, the prosecution, and conclusion of my present studies, which are more happily performed than I could have promised to myself, when I laboured under such discouragements. For what I have done, imperfect as it is for want of health and leisure to correct it, will be judged in after ages, and possibly in the present, to be no dishonour to my native country, whose language and poetry would be more esteemed abroad, if they were better understood. Somewhat—give me leave to say—I have added to both of them in the choice of words and harmony of numbers, which were wanting—especially the last—in all our poets, even in those who, being endued with genius, yet have not cultivated their mother-tongue with sufficient care; or, relying on the beauty of their thoughts, have judged the ornament of words and sweetness of sound unnecessary. One is for raking in Chaucer—our English Ennius—for antiquated words, which are never to be revived but when sound or significancy is wanting in the present language. But many of his deserve not this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could

revive them. Others have no ear for verse, nor choice of words, nor distinction of thoughts, but mingle farthings with their gold to make up the sum. Here is a field of satire opened to me; but since the Revolution, I have wholly renounced that talent: for who would give physic to the great when he is uncalled—to do his patient no good, and endanger himself for his prescription? Neither am I ignorant but I may justly be condemned for many of those faults of which I have too liberally arraigned others.

It is chiefly as a dramatic writer that Dryden can be charged with the imitation of French models. Of his plays, nearly thirty in number, the comedies for the most part in prose, the tragedies in rhyme, few have much merit considered as entire works, although there are brilliant passages and spirited scenes in most of them. Of the whole number, he has told us that his tragedy of *All for Love, or The Word Well Lost* (founded on the story of *Antony and Cleopatra*), was the only play he wrote for himself; the rest, he admits, were sacrifices to the vitiated taste of the age. His *Almanzor, or The Conquest of Granada* (in two parts), although extravagant, is also full of genius. Of his comedies, the *Spanish Friar* is perhaps the best; it has some most effective scenes.

DRAMATISTS

Many others of the poets of this age whose names have been already noticed were also dramatists. Milton's *Comus* was never acted publicly, nor his *Samson Agonistes* at all. Cowley's *Love's Riddle* and *Cutter of Coleman Street* were neither of them originally written for the stage; but the latter was brought out in one of the London theatres after the Restoration, and was also revived about the middle of the last century. Waller altered the fifth act of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, making his additions to the blank verse of the old dramatists in rhyme, as he states in a prologue:—

> In this old play what's new we have expressed
> In rhyming verse distinguish'd from the rest;
> That, as the Rhone its hasty way does make
> (Not mingling waters) through Geneva's lake,
> So, having here the different styles in view,
> You may compare the former with the new.

Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, besides his *Rehearsal*, which was a witty parody directed against the extravagances of the heroic drama, wrote a farce entitled the *Battle of Sedgmoor*, and also altered Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *The Chances*. The tragedy of *Valentinian* of the same writers was altered by the Earl of Rochester. Sedley wrote three comedies, mostly in prose, and three tragedies, one in rhyme and two in blank verse. And Davenant is the author of twenty-five tragedies, comedies, and masques, produced between 1629 and his death in 1668. But the most eminent dramatic names of this era are those of Thomas Otway, Nathaniel Lee, John Crowne, Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley and Thomas Southerne. Of six tragedies and four comedies written by Otway (1651–1685), his tragedies of the *Orphan* (1680) and *Venice Preserved* (1682), still sustain his fame and popularity as the most pathetic and tear-drawing of all our dramatists. Their licentiousness has necessarily banished his comedies from the stage, with most of those of his contemporaries. Lee (1655–1692), has also great tenderness, with much more fire and imagination than Otway; of his pieces, eleven in number—all tragedies—his *Theodosius, or The Force of Love*, *Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great*, *Nero*, and *Mithridates* are the most celebrated. Crowne, though several of his plays were highly successful when first produced, was almost forgotten, till Charles Lamb reprinted some of his scenes in his *Dramatic Specimens*, and showed that no dramatist of that age had written finer things. Of seventeen pieces produced by Crowne between 1671 and 1698, his tragedy of *Thyestes* and his comedy of *Sir Courtley Nice*, are in particular of eminent merit, the first for its poetry, the second for plot and character. Etherege is the author of only three comedies, *The Comical Revenge* (1664), *She Would if She Could* (1668), and the *Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676): all remarkable for the polish and fluency of the dialogue, and entitled to be regarded as having first set the example of that modern style of comedy which was afterwards cultivated by Wycherley, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Congreve. Wycherley, who was born in 1640, and lived till 1715, produced his only four plays, *Love in a Wood* (1672), *The Gentleman Dancing Master* (1673), *The Country Wife* (1675), and *The Plain Dealer* (1677), all comedies, between the years 1672 and 1677. The two last of these pieces are written with more elaboration than anything of Etherege's, and both contain some bold delineation of character and strong satiric writing, reminding us at times of Ben Jonson. Wycherley is a master of savage wit, and his brutality of temper does not hinder him from creating some vital types of his line. Southerne, who was only born in the year of the Restoration, and lived till 1746, had produced no more than his two first plays before the Revolution of 1688,—his tragedy of *The Loyal Brother* in 1682, and his comedy of *The Disappointment* in 1684. Of ten dramatic pieces of which he is the author, five are comedies, and are of little value; but his tragedies of *The Fatal Marriage* (1692), *Oroonoko* (1696), and *The Spartan Dame* (1719), are interesting and affecting. Nicholas Rowe's *Fair Penitent* (1703), and *Jane Shore* (1714), were popular. Aphra Behn's indefatigable labours were directed to the lowest phases of popular taste.

PROSE WRITERS.—CLARENDON (1608–1674)

Eminent as he is among the poets of his age, Dryden is also one of the greatest of its prose writers. In ease, flexibility, and variety, indeed, his English prose has scarcely ever been excelled. Cowley, too, is a charming writer of prose: the natural, pure, and flowing eloquence of his *Essays* is better than anything in his poetry. Waller, Suckling, and Sedley, also, wrote all well in prose; and Marvel's literary reputation is founded more upon his prose than upon his verse. Of writers exclusively in prose belonging to the space between the Restoration and the Revolution, Clarendon may be first mentioned, although his great work, his *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars*, was not published till the year 1702, nor his *Life and Continuation of his History*, before 1759. The manner in which he constructs his sentences, indeed, often sets at defiance all the rules of syntax; but yet he is never unintelligible or obscure—with such admirable expository skill is the matter arranged, even where the mere verbal sentence-making is the most negligent and entangled. The style, in fact, is that proper to speaking rather than to writing, and had, no doubt, been acquired by Clarendon, not so much from books as from his practice in speaking at the bar and in parliament. But his writing possesses the quality that interests above all the graces or artifices of rhetoric—the impress of a mind informed by its subject, and having a complete mastery over it; while the broad full stream in which it flows makes the reader feel as if he were borne along on its tide. The abundance, in particular, of his stores of language and illustration in his characters of the eminent persons engaged on both sides of the great contest seems inexhaustible. In the art of character drawing he is not easily excelled. The historical value of his history, however, is naturally much disputed. It is too much to expect that it should be wholly free from bias, though the tone is studiously moderate. Clarendon was far from being placed in the most favourable circumstances for giving a perfectly correct account of many of the events he has undertaken to record: he was not, except for a very short time, in the midst of the busy scene: looking to it, as he did, from a distance, while the mighty drama was still only in progress, he was exposed to some chances of misconception, and, without imputing to him any further intention to deceive than is implied in the purpose he chiefly had in view in writing his work, the vindication of his own side of the question, his position as a partisan, intimately mixed up with the affairs and interests of one of the two contending factions, could not fail in some measure to distort or colour the reports made to him by others. Yet he displays great judgment and power of analysis in his treatment of the involved action of the time.

Hobbes (1588–1679)

Another royalist history of the same times and events, the *Behemoth* of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, introduces one of the most distinguished names both in English literature and in modern metaphysical, ethical, and political philosophy. Hobbes, born in 1588, commenced his work in 1628, at the age of forty, by publishing his translation of *Thucydides*, but did not produce his first original work, his Latin treatise entitled *De Cive*, till 1642. This was followed by his treatises entitled *Human Nature* and *The Elements of Law*, in 1650; his *Leviathan*, in 1651; his translations in verse of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in 1675; and his *Behemoth, or History of the Causes oj the Civil Wars of England, and of the Counsels and Artifices by which they were carried on, from the year 1640 to the year 1660*, a few months after his death, at the age of ninety-two, in 1679. Regarded merely as a writer of English, there can be little difference of opinion about the high rank to be assigned to Hobbes. He has been described as our first uniformly careful and correct writer; and he set the first conspicuous and influential example of that regularity of style which was now considered desirable in the expository kind of poem. This, however, is his least merit. No writer has succeeded in making language a more perfect exponent of argument and analysis than it is as employed by Hobbes. His style is not glowingly eloquent, because his mind was not ardent and his subjects naturally refuse the exaggerations of imaginative or passionate expression. But in the prime qualities of precision and perspicuity, and also in economy and succinctness, in force and in terseness, it is the very perfection of a merely expository style. Without any affectation of point, also, it often shapes itself easily and naturally into the happiest aphoristic and epigrammatic forms. Hobbes's clearness and aptness of expression, the effect of which is like that of reading a book with a good light, never forsake him—not even in that most singular performance, his version of *Homer*, where there is scarcely a trace of ability of any other kind. It has been said that there are only two lines in that work in which he is positively poetical: those describing the infant Astyanax in the scene of the parting of Hector and Andromache, in the Sixth Book of the *Iliad*:—

"Now Hector met her with her little boy,
That in the nurse's arms was carried;
And like a star upon her bosom lay
His beautiful and shining golden head."

NEVILE

The most remarkable treatise on political philosophy which appeared in the interval between the Restoration and the Revolution is Henry Nevile's *Plato Redivivus*, or a Dialogue concerning Government; which was first published in 1681, and went through at least a second edition the same year. Nevile, who was born in 1620, and survived till 1694, had in the earlier part of his life been closely connected with Harrington, the author of the *Oceana*, and also with the founders of the Commonwealth, and he is commonly reckoned a republican writer; but the present work professes to advocate a monarchical form of government. Its leading principle is the same as that on which Harrington's work is founded, the necessity of all stable government being based upon property; but, in a Preface, in the form of an Address from the Publisher to the Reader, pains are taken to show that the author's application of this principle is different from Harrington's. It is observed, in the first place, that the principle in question is not exclusively or originally Harrington's; it had been discoursed upon and maintained in very many treatises and pamphlets before ever the *Oceana* came out: in particular in *A Letter from an Officer in Ireland to His Highness the Lord Protector*, printed in 1653, "which was more than three years before *Oceana* was written." "Besides," continues the writer, who is evidently Nevile himself, "*Oceana* was written (it being thought lawful so to do in those times) to evince out of these principles that England was not capable of any other government than a democracy. And this author, out of the same maxims or aphorisms of politics, endeavours to prove that they may be applied, naturally and fitly, to the redressing and supporting one of the best monarchies in the world, which is that of England." The tenor of the work is throughout in conformity with this declaration.

OTHER PROSE WRITERS.—CUDWORTH; MORE; BARROW; BUNYAN; &c.

The most illustrious antagonist of metaphysical Hobbism, when first promulgated, was Dr. Ralph Cudworth, the First Part of whose *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, wherein all the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted, was first published in 1678. As a vast storehouse of learning, and also as a display of wonderful powers of subtle and far-reaching speculation, this celebrated work is almost unrivalled in our literature; and it is also written in a style of elastic strength and compass which places its author in a high rank among our prose classics. Along with Cudworth may be mentioned his friend and brother Platonist, Dr. Henry More, the author of numerous theological and philosophical works, and remarkable for the union of some of the most mystic notions with the clearest style, and of the most singular credulity with powers of reasoning of the highest order. Other two great theological writers of this age were the voluminous Richard Baxter and the learned and eloquent Dr. Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow. "Baxter," says Bishop Burnet, "was a man of great piety; and, if he had not meddled in too many things, would have been esteemed one of the learned men of the age. He writ near two hundred books; of these three are large folios: he had a very moving and pathetical way of writing, and was his whole life long a man of great zeal and much simplicity; but was most unhappily subtle and metaphysical in everything."[1] Of Leighton, whom he knew intimately, the same writer has given a much more copious account, a few sentences of which we will transcribe:—"His preaching had a sublimity both of thought and expression in it. The grace and gravity of his pronunciation was such that few heard him without a very sensible emotion. . . . It was so different from all others, and indeed from everything that one could hope to rise up to, that it gave a man an indignation at himself and all others. . . .

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[1] *Own Time*, i. 180.

His style was rather too fine; but there was a majesty and beauty in it that left so deep an impression that I cannot yet forget the sermons I heard him preach thirty years ago."[1] The writings of Archbishop Leighton that have come down to us have been held by some of the highest minds of our own day—Coleridge for one—to bear out Burnet's affectionate panegyric. But perhaps the greatest genius among the theological writers of this age was the famous Dr. Isaac Barrow, popularly known chiefly by his admirable Sermons, but renowned also in the history of modern science as, next to Newton himself, the greatest mathematician of his time. But the name that in popular celebrity transcends all others, among the theological writers of this age, is that of John Bunyan (1628–1688), the author of various religious works, and especially of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. His other works are *The Holy War* (1682), *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), and *Grace Abounding* (1660), an autobiography of great passion and beauty of expression. Lord Macaulay, in a paper published in 1830, wrote:—"We are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the *Paradise Lost*, the other the *Pilgrim's Progress*." And, to the end of his life, we find him faithful to the same enthusiasm.[2] It must be admitted that, as a story, the *Pilgrim's Progress* is a great deal more interesting than the *Faërie Queene*. And we suspect that, if we are to take the verdict of the most numerous class of readers, it will carry off the palm quite as decidedly from the *Paradise Lost*. Still, although Bunyan had undoubtedly an ingenious, shaping, and vivid imagination, and his work, partly from its execution, partly from its subject, takes a strong hold, as Macaulay has well pointed out, of minds of very various kinds, commanding the admiration of a critic like Doctor Johnson, while it is loved by those who are too simple to admire it, we must make a great distinction between the power by which such general attraction as this is produced and what we have in the poetry of Milton and Spenser. The difference is something of the same kind with that which exists between any fine old popular ballad and a tragedy of Sophocles or of Shakespeare. Bunyan could rhyme too, when he chose ; but he has plenty of poetry without that, and we cannot agree with the opinion expressed by good Adam Clarke, "that the *Pilgrim's Progress* would be more generally read, and more abundantly useful to a particular class of readers, were it turned into decent rhyme." We suspect the ingenious gentleman who, in the early part of the last century, published an edition of *Paradise Lost* turned into prose had a more correct notion of what would be most useful, and also most agreeable, to a pretty numerous class of readers.

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[1] *Own Time*, i. 135.

[2] See the *Review of Ranke's History of the Popes* (1840); and again the lively, though slight, sketch of Bunyan's history in the Biographies.

What Lord Macaulay says of Bunyan's English is worth quoting :—"The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. . . . Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain working men, was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed." The *Pilgrim's Progress* is immortal, by its sweet and simple English, its vivid and varied folk, and the dramatic interest of its spiritual story.

To the names that have been mentioned may be added those of Izaak Walton (1593–1683), the mild-tempered angler and biographer, whose *Compleat Angler* and *Lives* are so informed with his engaging personality. Sir William Temple (1628–1699), the lively, agreeable, and well-informed essayist and memoirist: and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, whose coloured and lively coxcombry expresses itself in an *Autobiography*. Earle's *Microcosmographie* (1628), the *Resolves* of Owen Feltham, and Sir Thomas Urquhart's admirable *Translation of Rabelais* are stragglers from the Elizabethan period. Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters* (1614) is a volume of studies in a fashionable kind. Cowley's *Essays* are easily and gracefully written.

ENGLISH LITERATURE SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1688

First Effects of the Revolution on our Literature

Various forces of reaction, and exhaustion combined with political causes, shaped finally the So-called Augustan Age,—the Age of Prose, the Age of Reason. The Revolution, brought on by some of the same causes that had given birth to the Commonwealth, and restoring something of the same spirit and condition of things, came like another nightfall upon our higher literature, putting out the light of poetry in the land still more effectually than had even that previous triumph of the popular principle. Up to this date English literature had grown and flourished chiefly in the sunshine of court protection and favour; the public appreciation and sympathy were not yet sufficiently extended to afford it the necessary warmth and shelter. Its spirit, consequently, and affections were in the main courtly; it drooped and withered when the encouragement of the court was withdrawn, from the deprivation both of its customary support and sustenance and of its chief inspiration. And, if the decay of this kind of light at the Revolution was, as we have said, still more complete than that which followed upon the setting up of the Commonwealth, the difference seems to have been mainly owing to there having been less of it to extinguish at the one epoch than at the other. At the Restoration the impulse given by the great poets of the age of Elizabeth and James was yet operating, without having been interrupted and weakened by any foreign influence, upon the language and the national mind. Doubtless, too, whatever may be thought of the literary tendencies of puritanism and republicanism when they had got into the ascendant, the nurture both for head and heart furnished by the ten years of high deeds, and higher hopes and speculations, that ushered in the Commonwealth, must have been of a far other kind than any that was to be got out of the thirty years, or thereby, of laxity, frivolity, denationalization, and insincerity of all sorts, down the comparatively smooth stream of which men slid, without effort and without thought, to the Revolution.

SURVIVING WRITERS OF THE PRECEDING PERIOD

With the exception of some two or three names, none of them of the highest class, to be presently mentioned, almost the only writers that shed any lustre on the first reign after the Revolution are those of a few of the survivors of the preceding era. Dryden, fallen on what to him were evil days and evil tongues, and forced in his old age to write for bread with less rest for his wearied head and hand than they had ever had before, now produced some of his most laborious and also some of his most happily executed works: his translation of *Virgil*, among others, his *Fables*, and his *Alexander's Feast.* Lee, the dramatic poet, discharged from Bedlam, finished two more tragedies, his *Princess of Cleve* and his *Massacre of Paris*, before, "returning one night from the Bear and Harrow, in Butcher-Row, through Clare Market, to his lodgings in Duke Street, overladen with wine, he fell down on the ground as some say, according to others on a bulk, and was killed or stifled in the snow," early in the year 1692. The comic Etherege also outlived the deposition of his patron James II., but is not known to have written anything after that event; he followed James to France, and is reported to have died characteristically at Ratisbon a year or two after: "having treated some company with a liberal entertainment at his house there, where he had taken his glass too freely, and, being, through his great complaisance, too forward in waiting on his guests at their departure, flushed as he was, he tumbled down stairs and broke his neck, and so fell a martyr to jollity and civility." Wycherley, who at the date of the Revolution was under fifty, lived to become a correspondent of Pope, and even saw out the reign of Anne; but he produced nothing in that of William, although he published a volume of poems in 1704, and left some other trifles behind him, which were printed long afterwards by Theobald. Southerne, indeed, who survived till 1746, continued to write and publish till within twenty years of his death; his two best dramas—his *Fatal Marriage* and his *Oroonoko*—were both produced in the reign of William. Southerne, though not without considerable pathetic power, was fortunate in a genius on the whole not above the appreciation of the unpoetical age he lived in: "Dryden once took occasion to ask him how much he got by one of his plays; to which he answered that he was really ashamed to inform him. But, Mr. Dryden being a little importunate to know, he plainly told him that by his last play he cleared seven hundred pounds, which appeared astonishing to Dryden, as he himself had never been able to acquire more than one hundred by his most successful pieces."[1] Southerne, who, whatever estimate may be formed of his poetry, was not, we may gather from this anecdote, without some conscience and modesty, had worse writers than himself to keep him in countenance by their preposterous prosperity, in this lucky time for mediocrity and dulness. Shadwell was King William's first poet-laureate, and Nahum Tate his next. Tate, indeed, and his friend Dr. Nicholas Brady, were among the most flourishing authors and greatest public favourites of this reign: it was now that they perpetrated in concert their version, or perversion, of the Psalms. Brady also published a play, and, at a later date, some volumes of sermons and a translation of the *Æneid*, which, fortunately, not having been imposed or recommended by authority, are all among the most forgotten of books. Elkanah Settle, too, was provided for as City poet.

Among writers of another class, perhaps the most eminent who survived the Revolution, and continued to write after that event, was Sir William Temple. His *Miscellanies*, by which he is principally known, though partly composed before, were not published till then. John Evelyn, the diarist, died, at the age of eighty-five, in 1706. Bishop Stillingfleet, who had been known as an author since before the Restoration, for his *Irenicum* appeared in 1659, when he was only in his twenty-fourth year, and who had kept the press in employment by a rapid succession of publications during the next five-and-twenty years, resumed his pen after the Revolution, which raised him to the bench, to engage in a controversy with Locke about some of the principles of his famous essay; but, whether it was that years had abated his powers, or that he had a worse cause to defend, or merely that the public taste was changed, he gained much less applause for his dialectic skill on this than on most former occasions. Stillingfleet lived to the year 1699.

John Norris, also, one of the last of the school of English Platonists, which may be considered as having been founded in the latter part of the seventeenth century by Cudworth and Henry More, had become known as a writer some years before the Revolution; but the greater number of his publications first appeared in the reign of William, and he may be reckoned one of the best writers properly or principally belonging to that reign. Bishop Sprat, though a clergyman, as well as a writer both of prose and verse, cannot be called a divine; he had in earlier life the reputation of being the finest writer of the day, but, although he lived till very nearly the end of the reign of Anne, he published nothing, we believe, after the Revolution, nor indeed for a good many years before it. His style, which was so much admired in his own age, is a Frenchified English, with an air of ease and occasionally of vivacity.

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[1] *Biog. Dram.*

Good old Richard Baxter, who had been filling the world with books for half a century, just lived to see the Revolution. He died, at the age of seventy-six, in the beginning of December, 1691. And in the end of the same month died, a considerably younger man, Robert Boyle, another of the most voluminous writers of the preceding period, and famous also for his services in the cause of religion, as well as of science. In the preceding May, at a still less advanced age, had died the most eminent Scotch writer of the period between the Restoration and the Revolution, Sir George Mackenzie, lord-advocate under both Charles II. and his successor; the author of the *Institution of the Laws of Scotland*, and many other professional, historical, and antiquarian works, the master also of a flowing pen in moral speculation, belles lettres, and even in the department of fancy and fiction.

Bishop Burnet

The most active of the prose writers who, having acquired distinction in the preceding period, continued to prosecute the business of authorship after the Revolution, was the celebrated Dr. Gilbert Burnet, now Bishop of Salisbury. Burnet's literary performances of any considerable extent are only three in number:—his *Memoirs of James and William, Dukes of Hamilton*, published, in one volume folio, in 1676; his *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, three volumes folio, 1679, 1681, and 1714; and his *History of his Own Time*, in two volumes folio, published after his death in 1723 and 1734. There is enough of literary labour, as well as of historical value, in these works to preserve to the author a very honourable name; each of them contains much matter now nowhere else to be found, and they must always continue to rank among the original sources of our national history, both ecclesiastical and civil. The style is at least straightforward and unaffected, and generally as unambiguous as it is unambitious; the facts are clearly enough arranged; and the story is told not only intelligibly, but for the most part in rather a lively and interesting way. On the other hand, to any high station as a writer Burnet can make no claim; he is an industrious collector of intelligence, and a loquacious and moderately lively gossip; but he is quite destitute of imagination, wit, and humour, and subtlety, and depth and weight of thought, and whatever other qualities give anything either of life or lustre to what a man utters out of his own head or heart. We read him for the sake of his facts only. He does not see far into anything, nor indeed, properly speaking, into it at all. In his *History of his Own Time*, in particular, his style, with no strength, or flavour, or natural charm of any kind, to redeem its rudeness, is the most slovenly undress in which a writer ever wrapt up what he had to communicate to the public. Its only merit, as we have observed, is that it is without any air of pretension, and that it is evidently as extemporaneous and careless as it is unelevated, shapeless, and ungrammatical. Among the most important and best known of Burnet's other works are, that entitled *Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, 1680; his *Life of Bishop Bedel*, 1685; his *Travels through France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland*, 1685; and his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 1699. The first-mentioned of these is the best written of all his works.

THOMAS BURNET (1635–1715)

In the same year with Bishop Burnet, but at a more advanced age, died Dr. Thomas Burnet, the learned and eloquent author of the *Telluris Sacra Theoria*, first published in Latin in 1680, and afterwards translated into English by the author; of the *Archæologia Philosophica*, published in 1692; and of two or three other treatises, also in Latin, which did not appear till after his death. Burnet's system of geology has no scientific value whatever; indeed, it must be considered as a mere romance, although, from the earnestness of the author's manner and his constant citation of texts of Scripture in support of his positions, as well as from more than one answer which he afterwards published to the attacks made upon his book, it is evident that he by no means intended it to be so received. But, with his magnificence of manner he is a very different kind of writer from his garrulous and mitred namesake: his English style is singularly flowing and harmonious, as well as perspicuous and animated, and rises on fit occasions to much majesty and even splendour.

OTHER THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.—TILLOTSON; SOUTH

Another name that may be here mentioned is that of Archbishop Tillotson (1630–1694), a popular preacher among the Presbyterians before the Restoration, who began publishing sermons so early as in the year 1661, while he still belonged to that sect. He died in 1694, in his sixty-fourth year. Tillotson's *Sermons*, still familiarly known by reputation, long continued to be the most generally esteemed collection of such compositions in the language; but are probably now very little read. He had a great repute for eloquence and liberalism. There is much more of a true vitality in the sermons of Dr. Robert South, whose career of authorship commenced in the time of the Protectorate, though his life was extended till after the accession of George I. He died in 1716, at the age of eighty-three. South's *Sermons*, the first of which dates even before the earliest of Tillotson's, and the last after Tillotson's latest, are very well characterized by Hallam:—"They were," he observes, "much celebrated at the time, and retain a portion of their renown. This is by no means surprising. South had great qualifications for that popularity which attends the pulpit, and his manner was at that time original. Not diffuse, nor learned, nor formal in argument like Barrow, with a more natural structure of sentences, a more pointed though by no means a more fair and satisfactory turn of reasoning, with a style clear and English, free from all pedantry, but abounding with those colloquial novelties of idiom, which, though now become vulgar and offensive, the age of Charles II. affected, sparing no personal or temporary sarcasm, but, if he seems for a moment to tread on the verge of buffoonery, recovering himself by some stroke of vigorous sense and language: such was the witty Dr. South, whom the courtiers delighted to hear. His sermons want all that is called unction, and sometimes even earnestness; but there is a masculine spirit about them, which, combined with their peculiar characteristics, would naturally fill the churches where he might be heard."[1] Both South and Tillotson are considered to belong as divines to the

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[1] *Lit. of Eur.*, iv. 56.

Arminian, or, as it was then commonly called, the Latitudinarian School—as well as Cudworth, More, and Stillingfleet.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS

George Savile, Lord Halifax (1633–1695), was a political writer who found pungent and exact literary expression for his shrewd studies of the life of his time in works like *The Character of a Trimmer*, and the *Letter to a Dissenter.* John Evelyn, the diarist (1620–1706), wrote his memoirs in a cultured but pallid style; he is quickened by a pensive sweetness in his *Memoir of Margaret Blagge.* The prince of diarists, however, is Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), who locked the spirit of his age in his cipher journal with a violent zest for all kinds of experience and a gay command of racy, frank, and picturesque writing. John Aubrey and Anthony à Wood were minor gossips. Roger l'Estrange (1616–1704) was an active journalist and translator. Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage* had distinct consequences in the history of the stage; and his *Essays* were written in vigorous colloquial English.

LOCKE (1632–1704)

The only considerable literary name that belongs exclusively, or almost exclusively, to the first reign after the Revolution is that of John Locke, who was born in 1632. Although his *Adversariorum Methodus, or New Method of a Common-Place Book*, had appeared in French in Leclerc's *Bibliothèque* for 1686, and an abridgment of his celebrated *Essay*, and his *First Letter on Toleration*, both also in French, in the same publication for 1687 and 1688, he had published nothing in English, or with his name, till he produced in 1690 the work which has made him one of the best known of English writers, both in his own and in other countries, his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* This was followed by his *Second Letter on Toleration*, and his two *Treatises on Government*, in the same year; his *Considerations on Lowering the Interest of Money*, in 1691; his *Third Letter on Toleration*, in 1692; his *Thoughts Concerning Education*, in 1693; his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, in 1695; and various controversial tracts in reply to his assailants, Dr. Edwards and Bishop Stillingfleet, between that date and his death in 1704. After his death appeared his *Conduct of the Understanding*, and several theological treatises, the composition of which had been the employment of the last years of his industrious and productive old age. Locke's famous *Essay* was the first work, perhaps in any language, which professedly or systematically attempted to popularize metaphysical philosophy. It is the first comprehensive survey that had been attempted of the whole mind and its faculties; and the very conception of such a design argued an intellect of no common reach, originality, and boldness. It will remain also of very considerable value as an extensive register of facts, and a storehouse of acute and often suggestive observations on psychological phenomena, whatever may be the fate of the views propounded in it as aspiring to constitute a metaphysical system. Further, it is not to be denied that this work has exercised a powerful influence upon the course of philosophical inquiry and opinion ever since its appearance. At first, in particular, it did good service in putting finally to the rout some fantastic notions and methods that still lingered in the schools; it was the loudest and most comprehensive proclamation that had yet been made of the liberation of philosophy from the dominion of authority; but Locke's was a mind stronger and better furnished for the work of pulling down than of building up: he had enough of clear-sightedness and independence of mental character for the one; whatever endowments of a different kind he possessed, he had too little imagination, or creative power, for the other. Besides, the very passionless character of his mind would have unfitted him for going far into the philosophy of our complex nature, in which the passions are the revealers and teachers of all the deepest truths, and alone afford us any intimation of many things which, even with the aid of their lurid light, we discern but as fearful and unfathomable mysteries. Clarity and effective deploying of argument Locke certainly possessed; but his very superficial philosophy by its mere sensationalism marks the profound distaste for idealism of his epoch.

SWIFT

Jonathan Swift lived from 1667 to 1745. He was of English origin, born in Ireland. His education he received at Kilkenny Grammar School and Trinity College, Dublin, without evidently showing any degree of brilliancy. He entered the service of Sir William Temple as secretary, returning to his household after two years spent in a living in Ireland. In Temple's house he began his long intimacy with Stella (Esther Johnson). At Temple's death Swift went to Ireland, where he became secretary to Lord Deputy Berkeley. Various small preferments then fell to his lot while he lived at Laracor. As the Whigs showed little sense of his services he now changed his politics in 1710, and warred with the Whigs in the *Examiner*. He ultimately received the Deanery of Dublin; but *The Tale of a Tub* prevented further church preferment. He lived in Dublin, with many visits to London, made irruptions into Irish politics, and divided his heart between Stella and Vanessa (Esther Vanhomrigh). After great suffering he died insane.

The renowned *Tale of a Tub*, a satire on the churches which is one of the recognized masterpieces of irony, and a tract entitled *The Battle of the Books*, published together in 1704, were the first announcement of the greatest master of satire at once comic and caustic that has yet appeared in our language. Swift had already, in the last years of the reign of King William, made himself known by two volumes selected from the Letters of his master, Temple, and also by a political pamphlet in favour of the ministry of the day, which attracted little notice, and gave as little promise of his future eminence as a writer. To politics and to satire, however, he adhered throughout his career—often blending the two, but producing scarcely anything, if we may not except some of his effusions in verse, that was not either satirical or political. His course of authorship as a political writer may be considered properly to begin with his *Letter Concerning the Sacramental Test*, and another high Tory and High Church tract, which he published in 1708; in which same year he also came forward with his ironical *Argument against the Abolition of Christianity* (1708), and, in his humorous *Predictions*, first assumed his *nom de guerre* of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, subsequently made so famous by other *jeux d'esprit* in the same style, and by its adoption soon after by the wits of the *Tatler*. Of his other most notable performances, his *Conduct of the Allies* was published in 1712; his *Public Spirit of the Whigs*, in 1714; his *Drapier's Letters*, in 1724; his immortal *Gulliver's Travels*, in 1726; his *Modest Proposal*, in 1729; and his *Polite Conversation*, which, however, had been written many years before, in 1738. His poem of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, besides, had appeared, without his consent, in 1723, soon after the death of Miss Hester Vanhomrigh, its heroine. The *History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne* (if his, which there can hardly be a doubt that it is), the

Directions for Servants, many of his verses and other shorter pieces, and his *Diary written to Stella* (Miss Johnson, whom he eventually married), were none of them printed till after, some of them not till long after, his death, which took place in 1745.

"O thou!" exclaims his friend Pope,

—— "whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver!
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair,
Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
Or thy grieved country's copper chains unbind,"—

lines that describe comprehensively enough the celebrated dean's genius and writings—what he did and what he was. Into everything that came from his pen he put a strong infusion of himself; in his writings we read the man—not merely his intellectual ability, but his moral nature, his passions, his principles, his prejudices, his humours, his whole temper and individuality. He is of those whose individuality is at once their strength and their weakness;—their strength, inasmuch as it distinguishes them from the multitude of writers of mere talent or expository skill; their weakness and bondage, in that it withholds them from ever going out of themselves, and rising from the merely characteristic, striking, or picturesque, either to the dramatic or to the beautiful. The class, however, is one of wide comprehension, and includes many degrees of power, and even many diversities of gifts. Swift was neither a Cervantes nor a Rabelais; but yet, with something that was peculiar to himself, he combined considerable portions of both. He had more of Cervantes than Rabelais had, and more of Rabelais than was given to Cervantes. There cannot be claimed for him the refinement, the humanity, the pathos, the noble elevation of the Spaniard—all that irradiates and beautifies his satire and drollery as the blue sky does the earth it bends over; neither, with all his ingenuity and fertility, does our English wit and humorist anywhere display either the same inexhaustible abundance of grotesque invention, or the same gaiety and luxuriance of fancy, as the historian of the *Doings and Sayings of the Giant Gargantua*. Yet neither Cervantes nor Rabelais, nor both combined, could have written the *Tale of a Tub*. The torrent of triumphant merriment is broader and more rushing than anything of the same kind in either. When we look indeed to the perfection and exactness of the allegory at all points, to the biting sharpness and at the same time the hilarity and comic animation of the satire, to its strong and unpausing yet easy and natural flow, to the incessant blaze of the wit and humour, and to the style so clear, so vivid and expressive, so idiomatic, so English, so true and appropriate in all its varieties, narrative, didactic, rhetorical, colloquial, as we know no work of its class in our own language that as a whole approaches this, so we doubt if there be another quite equal to it in any language.

Swift was undoubtedly the most masculine intellect of his age, the most earnest thinker of a time in which there was less among us of earnest and deep thinking than in any other era of our literature. In its later and more matured form, his wit itself becomes earnest and passionate, and has a severity, a fierceness, a *sæva indignatio*, that are all his own, and that have never been blended in any other writer with so keen a perception of the ludicrous and so much general comic power. The breath of his rich, pungent, original jocularity is at the same time cutting as a sword and consuming as fire. Other masters of the same art are satisfied if they can only make their readers laugh; with Swift, to excite the emotion of the ludicrous is, in most of his writings, only a subordinate purpose,—a means employed for effecting quite another end; if he labours to make anything ridiculous, it is because he hates it, and would have it trodden into the earth or extirpated. This, at least, became the settled temper of all the middle and latter portion of his life. No sneaking kindness for his victim is to be detected in his crucifying raillery; he is not a mere admirer of the comic picturesque, who will sometimes rack or gibbet an unhappy individual for the sake of the fantastic grimaces he may make, or the capers he may cut in the air; he has the true spirit of an executioner, and only loves his joke as sauce and seasoning to more serious work. Few men have been more perversely prejudiced and self-willed than Swift, and therefore of absolute truth his works may probably contain less than many others not so earnestly written; but of what was truth to the mind of the writer, of what he actually believed and desired, his writing is charged. This is Swift's great distinction among the masters of wit and humour;—the merriest of his jests is an utterance of some real feeling of his heart at the moment, as much as the fiercest of his invectives. Alas! with all his jesting and merriment, he did not know what it was to have a mind at ease, or free from the burden and torment of dark, devouring passions, till, in his own words, the cruel indignation that tore continually at his heart was laid at rest in the grave. In truth, the insanity which ultimately laid prostrate his fine faculties had cast something of its black shadow athwart their vision from the first—as he himself probably felt or suspected when he determined to bequeath his fortune to build an hospital in his native country for persons afflicted with that calamity; and sad enough, we may be sure, he was at heart, when he gaily wrote that he did so merely

To show, by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.[1]

Yet the madness, or predisposition to madness, was also part and parcel of the man, and possibly an element of his genius—which might have had less earnestness and force, as well as less activity, productiveness, and originality, if it had not been excited and impelled by that perilous fervour.

Swift would probably have enjoyed a higher reputation as a poet if he had not been so great a writer in prose. His productions in verse are considerable in point of quantity, and many of them admirable of their kind. But those of them that deserve to be so described belong to the humblest kind of poetry—to that kind which has scarcely any distinctively poetical quality or characteristic about it except the rhyme. He has made some attempts in a higher style, but with little success. His *Pindaric Odes*, written and published when he was a young man, drew from Dryden (who was his relation) the emphatic judgment, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet": and, though Swift never forgave this frankness, he seems to have felt that the prognostication was a sound one, for he wrote no more *Pindaric Odes*. Nor indeed did he ever afterwards attempt anything considerable in the way of serious poetry, if we except his *Cadenus and Vanessa* (the story of Miss Vanhomrigh), his effusion entitled *Poetry, a Rhapsody*, and that on his own death—and even these are chiefly distinguished from his other productions by being longer and more elaborate, the most elevated portions of the first-mentioned scarcely rising above narrative and reflection, and whatever there is of more dignified or solemn writing in the two others being largely intermixed with comedy and satire in his usual easy ambling style. With all his liveliness of fancy, he had no grandeur of imagination, as little feeling of the purely graceful or beautiful, no capacity of tender emotion, no sensibility to even the simplest forms of music. With these deficiencies it was impossible that he should produce anything that could be called poetical in a high sense. But of course he could put his wit and fancy into the form of verse—and so as to make the measured expression and the rhyme give additional point and piquancy to his strokes of satire and ludicrous narratives or descriptions. Some of his lighter verses are as good as anything of the kind in the language.

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[1] "I have often," says Lord Orrery, "heard him lament the state of childhood and idiotism to which some of the greatest men of this nation were reduced before their death. He mentioned, as examples within his own time, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Somers; and, when he cited these melancholy instances, it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that showed great uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died."—*Remarks*, p. 188.

POPE

Alexander Pope was born in London in 1688, his father being a Roman Catholic tradesman. His education was a private one; he was deformed and sickly from his earliest years. His family soon moved to Binfield, near Windsor Forest. He began early to write verse, and his brilliant successes made him known to men like Wycherley, Walsh, Addison, Steele, and Swift. His translations of Homer made his fortune. Ultimately he settled at Twickenham (1718) in his famous villa, where he passed his time between illness, quarrels, congenial society and continued composition. If Swift was at the head of the prose writers of the time, Pope was as incontestably the first of the writers in verse, with no other either equal or second to him. Born a few months before the Revolution, he came forth as a poet, by the publication of his *Pastorals* in Tonson's *Miscellany*, in 1709, when he was yet only in his twenty-first year; and they had been written five years before. Nor were they the earliest of his performances; his *Ode on Solitude*, his verses upon *Silence*, his translations of the *First Book of the Thebais* and of Ovid's *Epistle from Sappho to Phaon*, and his more remarkable paraphrases of Chaucer's *January and May* and the *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*, all preceded the composition of the *Pastorals*. His *Essay on Criticism* (written in 1709) was published in 1711; the *Messiah* the same year (in the *Spectator*); the *Rape of the Lock* in 1712; the *Temple of Fame* (written two years before) the same year; his *Windsor Forest* (which he had commenced at sixteen) in 1713; the first four books of his translation of the *Iliad* in 1715; his *Epistle from Eloïsa to Abelard* (written some years before) we believe in 1717, when he published a collected edition of his poems; the remaining portions of the *Iliad* at different times, the last in 1720; his translation of the *Odyssey* (in concert with Fenton and Broome) in 1725; the first three books of the *Dunciad* in 1728; his *Essay on Man* in 1733 and 1734; his *Imitations of Horace*, various other satirical pieces, the *Prologue and Epilogue to the Satires*, his four epistles styled *Moral Essays* and his modernized version of Donne's *Satires* between 1730 and 1740; and the fourth book of the *Dunciad* in 1742. Besides all his verse, collections of his *Letters* were published, first surreptitiously by Curl, and then by himself, in 1737; and, among other publications in prose, his clever *jeu d'esprit* entitled a *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis* appeared in 1713; his *Preface to Shakespeare*, with his edition of the works of that poet, in 1721; his *Treatise of the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry*, and his *Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of This Parish* (in ridicule of Burnet's *History of his Own Time*) in 1727. He died in May, 1744, about a year and a half before his friend Swift, who, more than twenty years his senior, had naturally anticipated that he should be the first to depart, and that, as he cynically, and yet touchingly too, expressed it, while Arbuthnot grieved for him a day, and Gay a week, he should be lamented a whole month by "poor Pope,"—whom, of all those he best knew, he seems to have the most loved.

Pope, with talent enough for anything, might deserve to be ranked among the most distinguished prose writers of his time, if he were not its greatest poet; but it is in the latter character that he falls to be noticed in the history of our literature. And what a broad and bright region would be cut off from our poetry if he had never lived! If we even confine ourselves to his own works without regarding the numerous subsequent writers who have formed themselves upon him as an example and model, and may be said to constitute the school of which he was the founder, how rich an inheritance of wit and fancy do we not owe to him! Would any of us resign the *Rape of the Lock*, or the *Epistle of Eloïsa*, or the *Essay on Man*, or the *Moral Essays*, or the *Satires*, or the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, or the *Dunciad*? That we have nothing in the same style in the language to be set aside or weighed against any one of these performances will probably be admitted by all; and, if we could say no more, this would be to assign to Pope a rank in our poetic literature which certainly not so many as half-a-dozen other names are entitled to share with his. Down to his own day at least, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden alone had any pretensions to be placed before him or by his side. It is unnecessary to dilate upon what has been sufficiently pointed out by all the critics, and is too obvious to be overlooked, the general resemblance of his poetry, in both its form and spirit, to that of Dryden rather than to that of our elder great writers. A remarkable external peculiarity of it is, that he is probably the only one of our modern poets of eminence who has written nothing in blank verse; while even in rhyme he has nearly confined himself to that one decasyllabic line upon which it would almost seem to have been his purpose to impress a new shape and character. He belongs to the artificial school as opposed to the romantic, to that in which a French rather than to that in which an Italian inspiration may be detected. Whether this is to be attributed principally to his constitutional temperament and the native character of his imagination, or to the influences of the age in which he lived and wrote, we shall not stop to inquire. It is enough that such is the fact. But, though he may be regarded as in the main the pupil and legitimate successor of Dryden, the amount of what he learned or borrowed from that master was by no means so considerable as to prevent his manner from having a great deal in it that is distinctive and original. If Dryden has more impetuosity and a freer flow, Pope has far more delicacy, and, on fit occasions, far more tenderness and true passion. Dryden has written nothing in the same style as the *Rape of the Lock* on the one hand, or as the *Epistle to Abelard* and the *Elegy on the Death of an Unfortunate Lady* on the other. Indeed, these two styles may be said to have been both, in so far as the English tongue is concerned, invented by Pope. In what preceding writer had he an example of either? Nay, did either the French or the Italian language furnish him with anything to copy from nearly so brilliant and felicitous as his own performances? In the sharper or more severe species of satire, again, while in some things he is inferior to Dryden, in others he excels him. It must be admitted that Dryden's is the nobler, the more generous scorn; it is passionate, while Pope's is frequently only peevish: the one is vehement, the other venomous. But, although Pope does not wield the ponderous, fervid scourge with which his predecessor tears and mangles the luckless object of his indignation or derision, he knows how, with a lighter touch, to inflict a torture quite as maddening at the moment, and perhaps more difficult to heal. Neither has anything of the easy elegance, and simple natural grace, the most exquisite artifice simulating the absence of all art, of Horace; but the care, and dexterity, and superior refinement of Pope, his neatness, and concentration, and point, supply a better substitute for these charms than the ruder strength, and more turbulent passion, of Dryden. If Dryden, too, has more natural fire and force, and rises in his greater passages to a stormy grandeur to which the other does not venture to commit himself, Pope in some degree compensates for that by a dignity, a quiet, sometimes pathetic, majesty, which we find nowhere in Dryden's poetry. He was emphatically the poet of the highly artificial age in which he lived; and his excellence lay in, or at least was fostered and perfected by, the accordance of all his tastes and talents, of his whole moral and intellectual constitution, with the spirit of that condition of things. Not touches of natural emotion, but the titillation of wit and fancy,—not tones of natural music, but the tone of good society,—make up the charm of his poetry; the polish, pungency, and brilliance of which, however, in its most happily executed passages leave nothing to be desired. Pope, no doubt, wrote with a care and elaboration that were unknown to Dryden; against whom, indeed, it is a reproach made by his pupil, that, copious as he was, he

——— wanted or forgot
The last and greatest art—the art to blot.

ADDISON AND STEELE

Next to the prose of Swift and the poetry of Pope, perhaps the portion of the literature of the beginning of the last century that was both most influential at the time, and still lives most in the popular remembrance, is that connected with the names of Addison and Steele. These two writers were the chief boast of the Whig party, as Swift and Pope were of the Tories. Addison's poem, *The Campaign*, on the victory of Blenheim, his frigid tragedy of *Cato*, and some other dramatic productions, besides various other writings in prose, have given him a reputation in many departments of literature; and Steele also holds rank among our comic dramatists as the author of *The Tender Husband*, 1705, *The Conscious Lovers*, 1722; but it is as the first, and on the whole the best, of our English essayists, the principal authors (in every sense) of the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*, that these two writers have sent down their names with most honour to posterity.

Joseph Addison was born in 1672, his father being a divine who afterwards became Dean of Lichfield. Like Steele, he was educated at the Charterhouse, whence he passed to Oxford, first at Queen's, then at Magdalen. He took his degree in 1693, and received a fellowship in 1697. Destined to serve Whig politics, he was granted a travelling pension of £300 a year. His tour resulted in the prose works *Remarks on Italy*, and *Dialogues on Medals*; but on his return he found his party out of power. His poem of *The Campaign* (1704), however, established his fortunes, and the rest of his life was covered by a long series of appointments, culminating in the Secretaryship of State which he held for a short time, and resigned for a large pension. In 1716 he married the Countess Dowager of Warwick, and died in 1719 at Holland House.

Richard Steele, born in Dublin in 1672, had a somewhat irregular and spendthrift career, but was of a very lovable nature. He passed some time in the army, was appointed Gazetteer in 1707, and was knighted for his services to Whig politics. He retired to Carmarthen, and died there in 1729.

Steele was in his thirty-ninth, and his friend Addison in his thirty-eighth year, when the *Tatler* was started by the former in April, 1709. The paper, published thrice a week, had gone on for about six weeks before Addison took any part in it; but from that time he became, next to Steele, the chief contributor to it, till it was dropped in January, 1711. "I have only one gentleman," says Steele in his preface to the collected papers, "who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature." The person alluded to is Addison. "This good office," Steele generously adds, "he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid: I was undone by my auxiliary; when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." By far the greater part of the *Tatler*, however, is Steele's. Of 271 papers of which it consists, above 200 are attributed either entirely or in greater part to him, while those believed to have been written by Addison are only about 50. Among the other contributors Swift is the most frequent. The *Spectator* was begun within two months after the discontinuance of the *Tatler*, and was carried on at the rate of six papers a week till the 6th of December, 1712, on which day Number 555 was published. In these first seven volumes of the *Spectator* Addison's papers are probably more numerous than Steele's: and between them they wrote perhaps four-fifths of the whole work. The *Guardian* was commenced on the 12th of March, 1713, and, being also published six times a week, had extended to 175 numbers, when it was brought to a close on the 1st of October in the same year. There is only one paper by Addison in the first volume of the *Guardian*, but to the second he was rather a more frequent contributor than Steele. This was the last work in which the two friends joined; for Addison, we believe, wrote nothing in the *Englishman*, the fifty-seven numbers of which were published, at the rate of three a week, between the 6th of October, 1713, and the 15th of February following; nor Steele any of the papers, eighty in number, forming the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, of which the first was published on the 18th of June, 1714, the last on the 20th of December in the same year, the rate of publication being also three times a week. Of these additional *Spectators* twenty-four are attributed to Addison. The friendship of nearly half a century which had united these two admirable writers was rent asunder by political differences some years before the death of Addison, in 1719: Steele survived till 1729.

Invented or introduced among us as the periodical essay may be said to have been by Steele and Addison, it is a species of writing in which they have never been surpassed by any of their many followers. More elaboration and depth, and also more brilliancy, we may have had in some recent attempts of the same kind; but hardly so much genuine liveliness, ease, and cordiality, anything so thoroughly agreeable, so skilfully adapted to interest without demanding more attention than is naturally and spontaneously given to it. Perhaps so large an admixture of the speculative and didactic was never made so easy of apprehension and so entertaining, so like in the reading to the merely narrative. But, besides this constant atmosphere of the pleasurable arising simply from the lightness, variety, and urbanity of these delightful papers, the delicate imagination and exquisite humour of Addison, and the vivacity, warmheartedness, and altogether generous nature of Steele, give a charm to the best of them, which is to be enjoyed, not described. We not only admire the writers, but soon come to love them, and to regard both them and the several fictitious personages that move about in the other little world they have created for us as among our best and best-known friends. In the development of the essay, of the novel, and of English prose generally, the *Spectator* is a centre of interest. The well-bred irony of the papers, too, was a new and successful mode of attack on the manners of the day.

SHAFTESBURY (1671–1713); MANDEVILLE

Among the prose works of the early part of the last century which used to have the highest reputation for purity and elegance of style, is that by Lord Shaftesbury entitled *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Things.* Its author, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (grandson of the first Earl, the famous meteoric politician of the reign of Charles II.), was born in 1671 and died in 1713; and the *Characteristics*, which did not appear in its present form, or with that title, till after his death, consists of a collection of disquisitions on various questions in moral, metaphysical, and critical philosophy, most of which he had previously published separately. Shaftesbury was one of the first of conscious æsthetes, and his over-elaborated prose is not without its faded graces.

But the most remarkable philosophical work of this time, at least in a literary point of view, is Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees.* Bernard de Mandeville was a native of Holland, in which country he was born about the year 1670; but, after having studied medicine and taken his doctor's degree, he came over to England about the end of that century, and he resided here till his death in 1733. His *Fable of the Bees* originally appeared in 1708, in the form of a poem of 400 lines in octosyllabic verse, entitled the *Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest*, and it was not till eight years afterwards that he added the prose notes which make the bulk of the first volume of the work as we now have it. The second volume, or part, which consists of a series of six dialogues, was not published till 1729. The leading idea of the book is indicated by its second title, *Private Vices Public Benefits*;—in other words, that what are called and what really are vices in themselves, and in the individual indulging in them, are nevertheless, in many respects, serviceable to the community. Mandeville holds in fact, to quote the words in which he sums up his theory at the close of his first volume, "that neither the friendly qualities and kind affections that are natural to man, nor the rival virtues he is capable of acquiring by reason and self-denial, are the foundation of society; but that what we call evil in this world, moral as well as natural, is the grand principle that makes us sociable creatures, the solid basis, the life and support, of all trades and employment without exception; that there we must look for the true origin of all arts and sciences; and that the moment evil ceases the society must be spoiled, if not totally destroyed." The doctrine had a startling appearance thus nakedly announced; and the book occasioned a great commotion; but independently altogether of its general principles and conclusions, the work is full both of curious matter and of vigorous writing.

Mandeville, certainly, is no flatterer of human nature; his book, indeed, is written throughout in a spirit not only satirical, but cynical. Every page, however, bears the stamp of independent thinking; and many of the remarks he throws out indicate that he had at least glimpses of views which were not generally perceived or suspected at that day. It would probably be found that the *Fable of the Bees* has been very serviceable in the way of suggestion to various subsequent writers who have not adopted the general principles of the work. Some paragraphs, for example, are remarkable as an anticipation of a famous passage in the *Wealth of Nations*. Mandeville certainly caricatures and debases all the nobler aspects of humanity; but he was extremely intelligent, and wrote in a live and racy style.

GAY; ARBUTHNOT; ATTERBURY

Along with Pope, as we have seen, Swift numbers among those who would most mourn his death, Gay and Arbuthnot. He survived them both, Gay having died, in his forty-fourth year, in 1732, and Arbuthnot at a much more advanced age in 1735.

John Gay, the author of a considerable quantity of verse and of above a dozen dramatic pieces, is now chiefly remembered for his *Beggar's Opera*, his *Fables*, his mock-heroic poem of *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, and some of his ballads. He has no pretensions to any elevation of genius, but there is an agreeable ease, nature, and sprightliness in everything he has written; and the happiest of his performances are animated by an archness, and light but spirited raillery, in which he has not often been excelled. His celebrated English opera, as it was the first attempt of the kind, still remains the only one that has been eminently successful. Now, indeed, that much of the wit has lost its point and application to existing characters and circumstances, the dialogue of the play, apart from the music, may be admitted to owe its popularity in some degree to its traditionary fame; but still what is temporary in it is intermixed with a sufficiently diffused, though not very rich, vein of general satire, to allow the whole to retain considerable piquancy. Even at first the *Beggar's Opera* was probably indebted for the greater portion of its success to the music; and that is so happily selected that it continues still as fresh and as delightful as ever.

Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), a native of Scotland, is generally regarded as the author of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, printed in the works of Pope and Swift, and said to have been intended as the commencement of a general satire on the abuses of learning, of which, however, nothing more was ever written except Pope's treatise already mentioned on *Bathos*, and one or two shorter fragments. The celebrated political satire, entitled *The History of John Bull*, which has been the model of various subsequent imitations, in none of which is the fiction at once so apposite and so ludicrous, is also attributed to Arbuthnot. Pope's highly wrought and noble *Prologue* to his *Satires*, in which the latter figures as the poet's interlocutor, will for ever preserve both the memory of their friendship, and also some traits of the character and manners of the learned, witty, and kind-hearted physician.

The commencement of the reign of the Whigs at the accession of the House of Hanover, which deprived Arbuthnot of his appointment as one of the Physicians Extraordinary—leaving him, however, in the poet's words,

> social, cheerful, and serene,
> And just as rich as when he served a queen—

was more fatal to the fortunes of another of Pope's Tory or Jacobite friends, Francis Atterbury, the celebrated bishop of Rochester, believed to have been the principal author of the reply to Bentley's *Dissertation on Phalaris*. Atterbury also took a distinguished part in the professional controversies of his day, and his sermons and letters, and one or two short copies of verse by him, are well known; but his fervid character probably flashed out in conversation in a way of which we do not gather any notion from his writings. Atterbury was deprived and outlawed in 1722; and he died abroad in 1731, in his sixty-ninth year.

PRIOR; PARNELL

Matthew Prior is another distinguished name in the band of the Tory writers of this age, and he was also an associate of Pope and Swift, although we hear less of him in their epistolary correspondence than of most of their other friends. Yet perhaps no one of the minor wits and poets of the time has continued to enjoy higher or more general favour with posterity. Much that he wrote, indeed, is now forgotten; but some of the best of his comic tales in verse will live as long as the language, which contains nothing that surpasses them in the union of ease and fluency with sprightliness and point, and in all that makes up the spirit of humorous and graceful narrative. They are our happiest examples of a style that has been cultivated with more frequent success by French writers than by our own. In one poem, his *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind*, extending to three cantos, he has even applied this light and airy manner of treatment with remarkable felicity to some of the most curious questions in mental philosophy. In another still longer work, again, entitled *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*, in three Books, leaving his characteristic archness and pleasantry, he emulates not unsuccessfully the dignity of Pope, not without some traces of natural eloquence and picturesqueness of expression which are all his own. Prior, who was born in 1664, commenced authorship before the Revolution, by the publication in 1688 of his *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, written in concert with Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, in ridicule of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*; and he continued a Whig nearly to the end of the reign of William; but he then joined the most extreme section of the Tories, and acted cordially with that party down to his death in 1721. His most delightful poetry is found among his occasional verse. Such also was the political course of Parnell, only that, being a younger man, he did not make his change of party till some years after Prior. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Parnell was born at Dublin in 1679, and left his original friends the Whigs at the same time with Swift, on the ejection of Lord Godolphin's ministry, in 1710. He died in 1718. Parnell is always an inoffensive and agreeable writer; and sometimes, as, for example, in his *Nightpiece on Death*, which probably suggested Gray's more celebrated *Elegy*, he rises to considerable impressiveness and solemn pathos. But, although his poetry is uniformly fluent and transparent, and its general spirit refined and delicate, it has little warmth or richness, and can only be called a sort of water-colour poetry. One of Parnell's pieces, we may remark,—his *Fairy Tale of Edwin and Sir Topaz*,—may have given some hints to Burns for his *Tam o' Shanter*.

BOLINGBROKE

The mention of Prior naturally suggests that of his friend and patron, also the friend of Swift and Pope—Henry St. John, better known by his title of the Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, although his era comes down to a later date, for he was not born till 1678, and he lived to 1751. Bolingbroke's collected prose works fill five quarto volumes (without including his *Letters*), and would thus entitle him by their quantity alone to be ranked as one of the most considerable writers of his time, as we have abundant testimony that he was one of the most brilliant orators and talkers. His writings, being principally on subjects of temporary politics, have lost much of their interest; but a few of them, especially his *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, his *Idea of a Patriot King*, and his account and defence of his own conduct in his famous *Letter to Sir William Windham*, will still reward perusal even for the sake of their matter, while in style and manner almost everything he has left is of interest. Bolingbroke's style, as we have elsewhere observed, "was a happy medium between that of the scholar and that of the man of society—or rather it was a happy combination of the best qualities of both, heightening the ease, freedom, fluency, and liveliness of elegant conversation with many of the deeper and richer tones of the eloquence of formal orations and of books. The example he thus set has probably had a very considerable effect in moulding the style of popular writing among us since his time."[1] Other prose writers were Richard Bentley (1662–1742), the great classical scholar, whose vigorous polemical writing in the Ancient and Modern controversy had some effect on style; Conyers Middleton and Benjamin Hoadley, both controversialists; Bishop Butler, whose *Sermons* (1726) and *Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1736) are profound, though obscure; and, greater than all these, Bishop George Berkeley, author of *Alciphron*, *the Theory of Vision*, 1709; the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710;

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[1] Article on Bolingbroke in *Penny Cyclopædia*, v. 78.

the *Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous*, and *Siris*, a disquisition on tar-water and mysticism. Berkeley was a great philosopher, with a style of gracious and evasive beauty, a master of irony, and the art of innuendo.

GARTH; BLACKMORE (1660-1718)

In one of the passages in which he commemorates the friendship of Swift, Atterbury, and Bolingbroke, Pope records also the encouragement his earliest performances in rhyme received from a poet and man of wit of the opposite party, "well-matured Garth."[1] Sir Samuel Garth, who was an eminent physician and a zealous Whig, is the author of various poetical pieces published in the reign of William and Anne; that entitled *The Dispensary*, a mock epic, in six short cantos, on the quarrels of his professional brethren, which appeared in 1699, is best known. The wit of this slight performance may have somewhat evaporated with age, but it cannot have been at any time very pungent. A much more voluminous, and also more ambitious, Whig poet of this Augustan age, as it is sometimes called, of our literature, was another physician, Sir Richard Blackmore. Blackmore made his débût as a poet so early as the year 1696, by the publication of his *Prince Arthur*, which was followed by a succession of other epics, or long poems of a serious kind, each in six, ten, or twelve books, under the names of *King Arthur*, *King Alfred*, *Eliza*, the *Redeemer*, the *Creation*, &c., besides a *Paraphrase of the Book of Job*, a new version of the Psalms, a *Satire on Wit*, and various shorter effusions both in verse and prose. The indefatigable rhymester—"the everlasting Blackmore," as Pope calls him—died at last in 1729. Nothing can be conceived wilder or more ludicrous than this incessant discharge of epics; but Blackmore, whom Dryden charged with writing "to the rumbling of his coach's wheels," may be pronounced, without any undue severity, to have been not more a fool than a blockhead.

At this time also Ambrose Phillips earned the nickname of "Namby-Pamby," by his sentimental verse, while Tom Phillips (1676–1708) wrote the clever burlesque of *The Splendid Shilling*.

DEFOE (1659–1731)

The Whigs, however, had to boast of one great writer of prose fiction, although Daniel Defoe was not recognized as one of themselves by the Whigs of his own day. He stood up, indeed, from first to last, for the principles of the Revolution against those of the Jacobites; but in the alternating struggle between the Whig and Tory parties for the possession of office he took little or no concern; he served and opposed administrations of either colour without reference to anything but their measures; thus we find him in 1706 assisting Godolphin and his colleagues to compass the union with Scotland; and in 1713 exerting himself with equal zeal in supporting Harley and Bolingbroke in the attempt to carry through their commercial treaty with France. He is believed to have first addressed himself to his countrymen through the press in 1683, when he was only in his twenty-third year. From this time for a space of above thirty years he may be said never to have laid down his pen as a political writer; his publications in prose and verse, which are far too numerous to be here particularized, embracing nearly every subject which the progress of events made of prominent importance during that time, or which was of eminent popular or social interest independently of times and circumstances.

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[1] See *Prologue to the Satires*, 135, &c.

Defoe's best political effusions are: *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, 1702; *The Essay on Projects*, 1698; *The True-born Englishman*, 1701; and *The Consolidator*, 1705. *The Hymn to the Pillory*, 1703, deserves a place apart; but *The Relation of Mrs. Veal* first shows the real Defoe.

His political writings account indeed for the smallest part of his literary renown. At the age of fifty-eight—an age when other writers, without the tenth part of his amount of performance to boast of, have usually thought themselves entitled to close their labours—he commenced a new life of authorship with all the spirit and hopeful alacrity of five-and-twenty. A succession of works of fiction, destined, some of them, to take and keep the highest rank in that department of our literature, and to become popular books in every language of Europe, now proceeded from his pen with a rapidity evincing the easiest flow as well as the greatest fertility of imagination. *Robinson Crusoe* appeared in 1719; the *Dumb Philosopher*, the same year; *Captain Singleton*, in 1720; *Duncan Campbell*, the same year; *Moll Flanders*, in 1721; *Colonel Jacque*, in 1722; the *Journal of the Plague*, and probably, also, the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (to which there is no date), the same year; the *Fortunate Mistress, or Roxana*, in 1724; the *New Voyage Round the World*, in 1725; and the *Memoirs of Captain Carleton*, in

1728. But these effusions of his inventive faculty seem to have been, after all, little more than the amusements of his leisure. In the course of the twelve years from 1719 to his death in 1731, besides his novels, he produced about twenty miscellaneous works, many of them of considerable extent. It may be pretty safely affirmed that no one who has written so much has written so well. No writer of fictitious narrative has ever excelled him in at least one prime excellence—the air of reality which he throws over the creations of his fancy; an effect proceeding from the strength of conception with which he enters into the scenes, adventures, and characters he undertakes to describe, and his perfect reliance upon his power of interesting the reader by the plainest possible manner of relating things essentially interesting. In some of his political writings there are not wanting passages of considerable height of style, in which, excited by a fit occasion, he employs to good purpose the artifices of rhetorical embellishment and modulation; but in his works of imagination his almost constant characteristic is a simplicity and plainness, which, if there be any affectation about it at all, is chargeable only with that of a homeliness sometimes approaching to rusticity. His writing, however, is always full of idiomatic nerve, and in a high degree graphic and expressive; and even its occasional slovenliness, whether the result of carelessness or design, aids the illusion by which the fiction is made to read like a matter of fact. The truthful air of Defoe's fictions, we may just remark, is of quite a different character from that of Swift's, in which, although there is also much of the same vivid conception, and minutely accurate delineation, a discerning reader will always perceive a smile lurking beneath the author's assumed gravity, telling him intelligibly enough that the whole is a joke. It is said, indeed, that, as the *Journal of the Plague* is quoted as an authentic narrative by Dr. Mead, and as Lord Chatham was, in all simplicity, in the habit of recommending the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* to his friends as the best account of the Civil Wars, and as those of *Captain Carleton* were read even by Samuel Johnson without a suspicion of their being other than a true history, so some Irish bishop was found with faith enough to believe in *Gulliver's Travels*, although not a little amazed by some things stated in the book.

DRAMATIC WRITERS.—CONGREVE; VANBRUGH, &C.

To this age, also, belong three of the greatest of our comic dramatists. Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar were born in the order in which we have named them, and also, we believe, successively presented themselves before the public as writers for the stage in the same order, although they reversed it in making their exits from the stage of life—Farquhar dying in 1707 at the age of twenty-nine, Vanbrugh in 1726 at that of fifty-four, Congreve not till 1729, in his fifty-ninth or sixtieth year.

Congreve's first play, *The Old Bachelor*, was brought out in 1693, the author having already, two or three years before, made himself known in the literary world by a novel called *The Incognita, or Love and Duty Reconciled. The Old Bachelor* was followed by *The Double Dealer* in 1694, and by *Love for Love* in 1695; the tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* was produced in 1697; and the admirable comedy of *The Way of the World* in 1700. A masquerade and an opera, both of slight importance, were the only dramatic pieces he wrote during the rest of his life. The comedy of Congreve blazes and crackles with wit and repartee, for the most part of an unusually pure and brilliant species,—not quaint, forced, and awkward, like what we find in some other attempts, in our dramatic literature and elsewhere, at the same kind of display, but apparently as easy and spontaneous as it is pointed, polished, and exact. His plots are also constructed with much artifice. His characters are polished as rapiers, and he has created at least one delightful lady in Millamont.

Sir John Vanbrugh (1666–1726) is the author of ten or twelve comedies, of which the first, *The Relapse*, was produced in 1697, and of which *The Provoked Wife*, *The Confederacy*, and *The Journey to London* (which last, left unfinished by the author, was completed by Colley Cibber), are those of greatest merit. The wit of Vanbrugh flows rather than flashes; but its copious stream may vie in its own way with the dazzling fire-shower of Congreve's, and his characters have much more of real flesh and blood in their composition, coarse and vicious as almost all the more powerfully drawn among them are.

George Farquhar, the author of *The Constant Couple*, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *The Recruiting Officer*, and of five or six other comedies, was a native of Ireland, in which country Congreve also spent his childhood and boyhood. Farquhar's first play, his *Love in a Bottle*, was brought out with great success at Drury Lane in 1698; *Sir Harry Wildair* was long popular; *The Beaux' Stratagem*, his last, was in the midst of its run when the illness during which it had been written terminated in the poor author's early death. The thoughtless and volatile, but good-natured and generous, character of Farquhar is reflected in comedies, which, with less sparkle, have more natural life and airiness, and are animated by a finer spirit of whim, than those of either Vanbrugh or Congreve. His morality, like theirs, is abundantly free and easy; but there is much more heart about his profligacy than in theirs, as well as much less grossness or hardness.

To these names may be added that of Colley Cibber, who has, however, scarcely any pretensions to be ranked as one of our classic dramatists, although, of about two dozen comedies, tragedies, and other pieces of which he is the author, his *Careless Husband* and one or two others may be admitted to be lively and agreeable. Cibber, who was born in 1671, produced his first play, the comedy of *Love's Last Shift*, in 1696, and was still an occasional writer for the stage after the commencement of the reign of George II.; one of his productions, indeed, his tragedy entitled *Papal Tyranny*, was brought out so late as the year 1745, when he himself performed one of the principal characters; and he lived till 1757. His well-known account of his own life, or his *Apology for his Life*, as he modestly or affectedly calls it, is an amusing piece of something higher than gossip; the sketches he gives of the various celebrated actors of his time are many of them executed, not perhaps with the deepest insight, but yet with much graphic skill in so far as regards those mere superficial characteristics that meet the ordinary eye.

MINOR POETS

The age of the first two Georges, if we put aside what was done by Pope, was not very prolific in poetry of a high order; but there are several minor poets belonging to this time whose names live in our literature, and some of whose productions are still read. Matthew Green's poem entitled *The Spleen* originally appeared, we believe, in his lifetime in the first volume of Dodsley's *Collection*—although his other pieces, which are few in number and of little note, were only published by his friend Glover after the death of the author in 1737, at the age of forty-one. *The Spleen*, a reflective effusion in octo-syllabic verse, is somewhat striking from an air of originality in the vein of thought, and from the concentration and epigrammatic point of the language. The *Grongar Hill* of

Dyer was published in 1726, when its author was in his twenty-seventh year, and was followed by *The Ruins of Rome* in 1740; and his most elaborate performance, *The Fleece*, in 1757, the year before his death. Dyer's is a natural and true note, though not one of much power or compass. What he has written is his own, not borrowed from or suggested by "others' books," but what he has himself seen, thought, and felt. There is also considerable descriptive power in Somervile's blank verse poem of *The Chase*, in four Books, which was first published in 1735. Somervile, who was a Warwickshire squire, and the intimate friend of Shenstone, and who, besides his *Chase*, wrote various other pieces, now for the most part forgotten, died in 1742. Tickell, Addison's friend, who was born in 1686 and lived till 1740, is the author of a number of compositions, of which his *Elegy on Addison* and his ballad of *Colin and Lucy* are the best known. The ballad Gray has called "the prettiest in the world"—and if prettiness, by which Gray here probably means a certain easy simplicity and trimness, were the soul of ballad poetry, it might carry away a high prize. Nobody writes better grammar than Tickell. Of his famous *Elegy*, the most opposite opinions have been expressed. Goldsmith has called it "one of the finest in our language"; and Johnson has declared that "a more sublime or elegant funeral poem is not to be found in the whole compass of English literature." So Lord Macaulay: "Tickell bewailed his friend in an *Elegy* which would do honour to the greatest name in our literature, and which unites the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper.[1] Steele, on the other hand, has denounced it as being nothing more than "prose in rhyme." And it must be admitted that it is neither very tender nor very imaginative; yet rhyme, too, is part and parcel of poetry, and solemn thoughts, vigorously expressed and melodiously enough versified, which surely we have here, cannot reasonably be refused that name, even though the informing power of passion or imagination may not be present in any very high degree.

The notorious Richard Savage is the author of several poetical compositions, published in the last fifteen or twenty years of his tempestuous and unhappy life, which he closed in Bristol gaol in 1743, at the age of forty-six. Savage's poem called *The Bastard* has some vigorous lines, and some touches of tenderness as well as bursts of more violent passion; but, as a whole, it is crude, spasmodic, and frequently wordy and languid. His other compositions, some of which evince a talent for satire, of which assiduous cultivation might have made something, have all passed into oblivion. The personal history of Savage, which Johnson's ardent and expanded narrative has made universally known, is more interesting than his verse; but even that owes more than half its attraction to his biographer. He had, in fact, all his life, apparently, much more of another kind of madness than he ever had of that of poetry.

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[1] *Essay on Addison.*

Fenton and Broome—the former of whom died in 1730, at the age of forty-seven, the latter in 1745, at what age is not known,—are chiefly remembered as Pope's coadjutors in his translation of the *Odyssey*. Johnson observes, in his *Life of Fenton*, that the readers of poetry have never been able to distinguish their Books from those of Pope; but the account he has given here and in the *Life of Broome* of the respective shares of the three, on the information, as he says, of Mr. Langton, who had got it from Spence, may be reasonably doubted.

One sweet and solitary figure in the Augustan Age is Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, who died in 1720. She wrote Pindaric odes and miscellaneous poems, of which the most famous is the *Nocturnal Reverie*, a poem in delicate octosyllabic verse, in which all the freshness and perfume of natural things breathe a kind of beauty alien to her time, and evidently unconscious of itself.

COLLINS; SHENSTONE; GRAY

The polished monotony of the Augustan age is now broken by the faint promise of the coming revival of romanticism. By far the greatest of all the transition writers of this age is Collins. William Collins, born in 1720, died at the early age of thirty-six, and nearly all his poetry had been written ten years before his death. His volume of *Odes*, descriptive and allegorical, was published in 1746; his *Oriental Eclogues* had appeared some years before, while he was a student at Oxford. Only his unfinished *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders* was found among his papers after his death, and it is dated 1749. The last six or seven years of his short life were clouded with a depression of spirits which made intellectual exertion impossible. All that Collins has written is full of imagination, pathos, and melody. Collins had emotion enough for anything; and in his ode entitled *The Passions*, he has shown with how strong a voice and pulse of humanity he could, when he chose, animate his verse, and what extensive and enduring popularity he could command. The *Dirge for Cymbeline* is a delicate piece of music; and so is the perfect *How Sleep the Brave*, while the *Ode to Evening* is filled with delicate felicities. His genius was of a subtle kind, though it only occasionally found entire expression.

Gray and Shenstone were both born before Collins, though they both outlived him,—Shenstone dying at the age of fifty in 1763, Gray at that of fifty-five in 1771. Shenstone is remembered for his *Pastoral Ballad*, his Spenserian *Schoolmistress*, and an elegy or two; but he was a true transition poet, whose longing for novel beauty was hardly courageous enough to free him from the fetters of the fashion of his time. Gray's famous *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, his two *Pindarics*, his *Ode on Eton College*, his *Long Story*, some translations from the Norse and Welsh, and a few other short pieces, which make up his contributions to the poetry of his native language, are all admirable for their exquisite finish, nor is a true poetical spirit ever wanting. When his two celebrated compositions, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, appeared together in 1757, Johnson affirms that "the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement;" and, although the difficulty or impossibility of understanding them which was then, it seems, felt and confessed, is no longer complained of, much severe animadversion has been passed on them on other accounts. Still, whatever objections may be made to the artificial and unnatural character and over-elaboration of their style, the gorgeous brocade of the verse does not hide the true fire and fancy beneath, or even the real elegance of taste that has arrayed itself so ambitiously. But Gray often expresses himself, too, as naturally and simply in his poetry as he always does in his charming Letters and other writings in prose: the most touching of his verses in his *Ode on Eton College*, 1747, for instance, are so expressed; and in his *Long Story* he has given the happiest proof of his mastery over the lightest graces and gaieties of song. He was a most scholarly and anxious poet: his appreciation of what was afterwards recognized as the romantic note in literature was far in advance of his time; but a certain thinness and languor of quality make us doubtful as to whether Matthew Arnold's estimate of the poet "who never spoke out," be not somewhat extravagant.

YOUNG ; THOMSON

Of the remaining poetical names of this age the two most considerable are those of Young and Thomson. Dr. Edward Young, the celebrated author of the *Night Thoughts*, was born in 1681 and lived till 1765. He may be shortly characterized as, at least in manner, a sort of successor, under the reign of Pope and the new style established by him and Dryden, of the Donnes and the Cowleys of a former age. He had nothing, however, of Donne's subtle fancy, and as little of the gaiety and playfulness that occasionally break out among the quibbles and contortions of Cowley. On the other hand, he has much more passion and pathos than Cowley, and perhaps makes a nearer approach in some of his greatest passages to the true sublime. But his style is radically an affected and false one ; and of what force it seems to possess, the greater part is the result not of any real principle of life within it, but of frequent straining. Yet Young, with all his insincere and theatrical qualities, showed both in his matter and his manner, a discontent with and a dim revolt against the school of Pope. James Thomson, 1700–1748, is all negligence and nature ; so negligent, indeed, that he pours forth his unpremeditated song apparently without the thought ever occurring to him that he could improve it by any study or elaboration, any more than if he were some winged warbler of the woodlands, seeking and caring for no other listener except the universal air which the strain made vocal. In his refusal of the couplet, his bold return to the discredited blank verse and Spenserian stanza, and in the directness of his vision, Thomson, who was immediately appreciated, worked a great change in the popular taste. That he was, with all the boldness of his themes, still a slave to the conventional phrasing of the time, only rendered him all the more effective as a mediator. As he is the poet of nature, so his poetry has all the intermingled rudeness and luxuriance of its theme. There is no writer who has drunk in more of the inmost soul of his subject. If it be the object of descriptive poetry to present us with pictures and visions, the effect of which shall vie with that of the originals from which they are drawn, then Thomson is the greatest of all descriptive poets ; for there is no other who surrounds us with so much of the truth of Nature, or makes us feel so intimately the actual presence and companionship of all her hues and fragrances. His spring blossoms and gives forth its beauty like a daisied meadow ; and his summer landscapes have all the sultry warmth and green luxuriance of June; and his harvest fields and his orchards "hang the heavy head" as if their fruitage were indeed embrowning in the sun; and we see and hear the driving of his winter snows, as if the air around us were in confusion with their uproar. The beauty and purity of imagination, also, diffused over the melodious stanzas of the *Castle of Indolence*, make that poem a thing of romantic charm. Thomson, whose *Winter*, the first portion of his *Seasons*, was published in 1726, died in 1748, in his forty-eighth year. He also wrote some feeble plays, like *Sophonisba* (1729), and a wearisome epic poem, *Liberty* (1734–6). Two years before had died his countryman, the Rev. Robert Blair, born in 1699, the author of the well-known poem in blank verse called *The Grave*, said to have been first published in 1743. It has occasional vigour of thought and expression, and it has always been one of our most popular religious poems.

ARMSTRONG; AKENSIDE; GLOVER

Among the more reactionary of the second-rate writers of longer poems about this date, the latter part of the reign of George II., immediately after the death of Pope, may be noticed Dr. John Armstrong, who was born in Scotland in 1709, and whose *Art of Preserving Health*, published in 1744, is remarkable for its Thomsonian diction; and Dr. Mark Akenside, likewise a physician, the author, at the age of twenty-three, of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, published in the same year with Armstrong's poem, and giving another example of the treatment of a didactic subject in verse with great ingenuity and success. Akenside's rich, though diffuse, eloquence, and the store of fanciful illustration which he pours out, evidence a wonderfully full mind. His cold dignity is not unimpressive. Neither Akenside nor Armstrong published any more verse after the accession of George III.; though the former lived till 1770, and the latter till 1779. Glover's blank verse epic of *Leonidas*, which appeared so early as 1737, had had a short day of extraordinary popularity, and is a performance of considerable rhetorical merit. Glover, who was a merchant of London, and distinguished as a city political leader on the liberal side (a circumstance which helped the temporary success of his epic), also wrote two tragedies, *Boadicea*, which was brought out in 1753; *Medea*, which appeared in 1761: they have the reputation of being cold and declamatory, and have both been long ago consigned to oblivion. He is best remembered for his vigorous ballad of *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*—which he wrote when he was seven-and-twenty, and was accustomed, it seems, to sing to the end of his life,—though Hannah More, who tells us she heard him sing it in his last days, is mistaken in saying that he was then past eighty. David Mallock or Mallet is also to be remembered for his ballad of *William and Margaret*, an interesting imitation of an old ballad in the artificial manner of his time.

SCOTTISH POETRY

Thomson was the first Scotsman who won any conspicuous place for himself in English literature. He had been preceded, indeed, in the writing of English by two or three others of his countrymen; by Drummond of Hawthornden, who has been mentioned in a preceding page, and his contemporaries—the Earl of Stirling, who is the author of several rhyming tragedies and other poems, published between 1603 and 1637, the Earl of Ancrum, by whom we have some sonnets and other short pieces, and Sir Robert Ayton, to whom is commonly attributed the well-known song, "I do confess thou'rt smooth and fair," and who is also the author of a considerable number of other similar effusions, many of them of superior polish and elegance. At a later date, too, Sir George Mackenzie, as already noticed, had written some English prose; as, indeed, Drummond had also done, besides his poetry. But none of these writers, belonging to the century that followed the union of the crowns, can be considered as having either acquired any high or diffused reputation in his own time, or retained much hold upon posterity. Even Drummond is hardly remembered as anything more than a sonneteer; his most elaborate work, his prose *History of the Jameses*, has passed into as complete general oblivion as the tragedies and epics of Lord Stirling and the *Essays* of Sir George Mackenzie. If there be any other writer born in Scotland of earlier date than Thomson, who has still a living and considerable name among English authors, it is Bishop Burnet; but those of his literary performances by which he continues to be chiefly remembered, however important for the facts they contain, have scarcely any literary value. Leighton, the eloquent archbishop of Glasgow, although of Scotch descent, was himself born in London. The poetry of Thomson was the first product of the next era, in which the two countries were really made one by their union under one legislature, and English became the literary language of the one part of the island as much as of the other.

The Scottish dialect, however, still continued to be employed in poetry. The great age of Scottish poetry, as we have seen, extends from about the beginning of the fifteenth to about the middle of the sixteenth century, the success of distinguished names comprehending, among others, those of James I., and Henryson, and Henry the Minstrel, and Gawin Douglas, and Dunbar, and Sir David Lyndsay. It is remarkable that this space of a hundred and fifty years exactly corresponds to the period of the decay and almost the extinction of poetry in England which intervenes between Chaucer and Surrey. On the other hand, with the revival of English poetry in the latter part of the sixteenth century the voice of Scottish song almost died away. The principal names of the writers of Scottish verse that occur for a hundred and fifty years after the death of Lyndsay are those of Alexander Scot, who was Lyndsay's contemporary, but probably survived him, and who is the author of several short amatory compositions, which have procured him from Pinkerton the designation of the Scottish Anacreon; Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington, who died at a great age in 1586, and is less memorable as a poet than as a collector and preserver of poetry, the two famous manuscript volumes in the Pepysian Library, in which are found the only existing copies of so many curious old pieces, having been compiled under his direction, although his own compositions, which have, with proper piety, been printed by the Maitland Club at Glasgow, are also of some bulk, and are creditable to his good feeling and good sense. Other Scottish poets of the sixteenth century, of whom nothing or next to nothing is known except the names and a few short pieces attributed to some of them, are John Maitland Lord Thirlstane (second son of Sir Richard), Alexander Arbuthnot, who was a clergyman, Clapperton Flemyng, John Blyth, Moffat, Felthy, Balvanis, Sempil, Norval, Allan Watson, George Bannatyne (the writer of the Bannatyne manuscript in the Advocates' Library), who was a canon of the cathedral of Moray, and Wedderburn, the author of the *Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs*, of which the first edition in all probability appeared in the latter part of this century. But it is possible that some of these names may belong to a date anterior to that of Lyndsay. King James, also, before his accession to the English throne, published in Edinburgh two collections of Scottish verse by himself; the first, in 1585, entitled *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy*; the other, in 1591, *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours*; but the royal inspiration is peculiarly weak and flat.

The next poet that appeared was Allan Ramsay, who was the contemporary of Thomson, and must be accounted the proper successor of Sir David Lyndsay, after the lapse of more than a century and a half. Ramsay was born in 1686, and lived till 1758. He belongs to the order of self-taught poets, his original profession having been that of a barber; his first published performance, his clever continuation of the old poem of *Christ's Kirk on the Green* (attributed by some to James I. of Scotland, by others to James V.) appeared in 1712; his *Gentle Shepherd*, in 1725; and he produced besides numerous songs and other shorter pieces from time to time. Ramsay's verse is in general neither very refined nor very imaginative, but it has always more or less in it of true poetic life. His lyrics, with all their frequent coarseness, are many of them full of rustic hilarity and humour; and his well-known pastoral, though its dramatic pretensions otherwise are slender enough, for nature and truth both in the characters and manners may rank with the happiest compositions of its class.

THE CHANGE

A great factor in this period of transition was the re-discovery of the old romances and ballads by men like Warton, Percy, Ramsay, MacPherson. Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen* appeared in 1765; but the Romantic Revival may almost be said to begin with the publication of Percy's *Reliques* in 1765. In MacPherson's *Ossian* (1760–1763) the Celtic tales and dreamy scenery re-entered the imagination of Europe, in however perverted a form.

Among the earliest precursors of the new passion and wonder was Christopher Smart, born in 1722, whose powers were plainly confused by insanity. His great achievement is the *Song to David*, which, in intensity of passion, resonance of metre, and fantastic succession of images, seems a pure anomaly among contemporary lyrics.

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770), "the sleepless soul that perished in his pride," is known as much by the tragic story of his brilliant and precocious forgeries, his desperate attempt to find work in London and his early suicide, as by his remarkable verse. The poems he produced as the verses written by the old monk Rowley show a determined effort to change the temper of poetry by a vivid resurrection of the mediæval past. His curious melodies, his nature-interest, his touches of mysterious romantic emotion, even his singular Rowley "dialect," render him permanently interesting to the student and to the literary historian.

James Beattie, professor of Moral Philosophy in Aberdeen university, gained a temporary renown by his poem of the *Minstrel* (1771–1774). He felt the new spirit in verse, but vaguely and confusedly; tried to express it with goodwill but without much ability, and for a time at least helped to popularize it.

Other versifiers of historical interest are William Mason (1725–1797), who wrote some dull poems and tragedies like *Elfrida*, on romantic subjects in a stilted style; William Falconer, author of *The Shipwreck*, very eighteenth century in style, though not in matter: and the brothers Warton, learned men who were appreciators rather than makers. Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* was a really remarkable aid to the new kind of verse and the wakening of the spirit of romanticism. Charles Churchill (1731–1764) was a satirist of a fiercely unscrupulous and personal kind, whose evident baseness and rancour cannot disguise the energy of his attack and the force of his versification. William Julius Mickle produced some pleasing songs and ballads.

THE NOVELISTS, RICHARDSON, FIELDING, SMOLLETT

A remarkable portion of the literature of the middle of the last century is the body of prose fiction, the authors of which we familiarly distinguish as the first modern English novelists, and which in some respects may be said still to stand apart from everything in the language produced either before or since. If there be any writer entitled to step in before Richardson and Fielding in claiming the honour of having originated the English novel, it is Daniel Defoe. But, admirable as Defoe is for his inventive power and his art of narrative, he can hardly be said to have left us any diversified picture of the social life of his time, and he is rather a great *raconteur* than a novelist, strictly and properly so called. He identifies himself, indeed, as perfectly as any writer ever did, with the imaginary personages whose adventures he details;—but still it is adventure he deals with rather than manners or character. It may be observed that there is seldom or ever anything characteristic in the language of his heroes and heroines: some of them talk, or write, through whole volumes, but all in the same style; in fact, as to this matter, every one of them is merely a repetition of Defoe himself. Great and original as he is in his proper line, and admirable as the fictions with which he has enriched our literature are for their other merits, Defoe has created no character which lives in the national mind—no Squire Western, or Trulliber, or Parson Adams, or Strap, or Pipes, or Trunnion, or Lesmahago, or Corporal Trim, or Uncle Toby.

On turning our eyes from his productions to those of either Henry Fielding or Samuel Richardson, we feel at once the spell of quite another sort of inventive or creative power. Yet no two writers could well be more unlike than the two we have mentioned are to one another both in manner and in spirit. Intellectually and morally, by original constitution of mind as well as in the circumstances of their training and situation, the two great contemporary novelists stood opposed the one to the other in the most complete contrast. Fielding, a gentleman by birth, and liberally educated, had been a writer for the public from the time he was twenty: Richardson, who had nearly attained that age before Fielding came into the world (the one was born in 1689, the other in 1707), having begun life as a mechanic, had spent the greater part of it as a tradesman, and had passed his fiftieth year before he became an author. Yet, after they had entered upon the same new field of literature almost together, they found themselves rivals upon that ground for as long as either continued to write. To Richardson certainly belongs priority of date as a novelist: the first part of his *Pamela*, which grew from a commission to produce a model letter writer, was published in 1740, the conclusion in 1741; and Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, originally conceived with the design of turning Richardson's work into ridicule, appeared in 1742. Thus, as if their common choice of the same species of writing, and their antipathies of nature and habit, had not been enough to divide them, it was destined that the two founders of the new school of fiction should begin their career by having a personal quarrel. For their works, notwithstanding all the remarkable points of dissimilarity between those of the one and those of the other, must still be considered as belonging to the same school or form of literary composition, and that a form which they had been the first to exemplify in our language. Unlike as *Joseph Andrews* was to *Pamela* yet the two resembled each other more than either did any other English work of fiction. They were still our two first novels properly so called—our two first artistically constructed epics of real life. And the identity of the species of fictitious narrative cultivated by the two writers became more apparent as its character was more completely developed by subsequent publications, and each proceeded in proving its capabilities in his own way, without reference to what had been done by the other. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, a terrific piece of irony, appeared in 1743; Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*—the greatest of his works—was given to the world in 1748; and the next year the greatest birth of Fielding's genius—his *Tom Jones*—saw the light. Finally, Fielding's *Amelia* was published in 1751: and Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1753. Fielding died at Lisbon in 1754, at the age of forty-seven; Richardson survived till 1761, but wrote nothing more.

Meanwhile, however, a third writer had presented himself upon the same field—Tobias Smollett, whose *Roderick Random* had appeared in 1748, his *Peregrine Pickle* in 1751, and his *Count Fathom* in 1754, when the energetic Scotsman was yet only in his thirty-fourth year. His *Sir Launcelot Greaves* followed in 1762, and his *Humphrey Clinker* in 1771, in the last year of the author's active life. Our third English novelist is as much a writer *sui generis* as either of his two predecessors, as completely distinguished from each of them in the general character of his genius as they are from each other. Of the three, Richardson had evidently by far the richest natural soil of emotion; his defects sprung from intellectual limitation; his power was his own in the strictest sense; not borrowed from books, little aided even by experience of life, derived almost solely from introspection of himself and communion with his own heart. Perhaps he alone of the three could have written what he did without having himself witnessed and lived through the scenes and characters described. His fertility of invention, in the most comprehensive meaning of that term, is wonderful—supplying him on all occasions with a copious stream both of incident and of thought that floods the page, and seems as if it might so flow on and diffuse itself for ever. Yet it must be confessed that he has delineated for us rather human nature than human life. Many characters, no doubt, are set before us in his novels, very admirably drawn and discriminated: Pamela, her parents, Mr. B., Mrs. Jewkes, Lovelace, Miss Howe, Miss Byron, Clementina, are all delineations natural, well worked out, and supported by many happy touches: but Richardson's psychology is finest when it enters intimate and almost pathological states of suffering, as in the great tragedy of *Clarissa Harlowe*. What interests us in Richardson's novels is the sentiment of his personages—not their modes but their motives of action—the anatomy of their hearts and inmost natures, which is unfolded to us with so elaborate an inquisition and such matchless skill. Fielding, on the other hand, has very little of this, and Smollett still less. They set before us their pictures of actual life in much the same way as life itself would have set them before us if our experience had chanced to bring us into contact with the particular situations and personages delineated; we are not in the particular confidence of any of the figures in the scene; there are they all, acting or talking according to their various circumstances, habits, and humours, and we are welcome to look at them and listen to them as attentively as we please; but, if we want to know anything more of them than what is visible to all the world, we must find it out for ourselves in the best way we can, for neither they nor the author will ordinarily tell us a word of it. What both these writers have given us in their novels is for the most part their own actual experience of life, irradiated, of course, by the lights of fancy and genius, and so made something much more brilliant and attractive than it was in the reality, but still in its substance the product not of meditation but of observation chiefly. Even Fielding, with all his wit, or at least pregnancy of thought and style, was helped by having his diversified practical knowledge of society to draw upon and especially his extensive and intimate acquaintance with the lower orders of all classes, in painting whom he is always greatest and most at home. Within that field, indeed, he is the greatest of all our novelists. Yet he has much greater craftsmanship than either Smollett or Richardson; and, indeed, of the works of all the three, his alone are admirable in reference to their formal character. His masterpiece, *Tom Jones*, built on the model of a prose classical epic is a triumph of construction. Both his style and the construction of his stories display a care and artifice altogether unknown to the others, both of whom, writing on without plan or forethought, appear on all occasions to have made use alike of the first words and the first incidents that presented themselves. Smollett, a practised writer for the press, had the command, indeed, of a fluent style; but it is animated by no peculiar expressiveness, by no graces either of art or of nature. He fell back, indeed, on the old form of the loosely-linked adventure-story. His power consists in the cordiality of his conception and the breadth and freedom of his delineation of the humorous, both in character and in situation. The feeling of the humorous in Smollett always overpowers, or at least has a tendency to overpower, the merely satirical spirit. Fielding's humour has generally a vein of satire running through it, even when it is most gay and genial.

LAURENCE STERNE

But he to whom the finest spirit of whim belongs among all these writers is the author of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Laurence Sterne, born in Ireland in 1713, had already published one or two unregarded sermons when the first and second volumes of his most singular novel were brought out at York in the year 1759. The third and fourth volumes followed in 1761; the fifth and sixth in 1762; the seventh and eighth not till 1765; the ninth in 1767. The six volumes of his *Yorick's Sermons* had also come out in pairs in the intervals; his *Sentimental Journey* appeared in 1768; and his death took place the same year. Sterne has been charged with imitation and plagiarism; but surely originality is the last quality that can be denied to him. To dispute his possession of that is much the same as it would be to deny that the sun is luminous because some spots have been detected upon its surface. If Sterne has borrowed or stolen some few things from other writers, at least no one ever had a better right to do so in virtue of the amount in his writings of what is really his own. If he has been much indebted to any predecessor, it is to Rabelais; but his humour is quite unlike anything in the mirth of Rabelais. There is not much humour, indeed, anywhere which resembles or can be compared with that of Sterne. It would be difficult to name any other writer who could have drawn Uncle Toby or Trim. Whatever he has done is wrought with the utmost care, and to the highest polish and perfection. With all his apparent caprices of manner, his language is throughout the purest idiomatic English; nor is there, usually, a touch in any of his pictures that could be spared without injury to the effect. And, in his great work, how completely brought out, how exquisitely finished, is every figure, from Uncle Toby, and Brother Shandy, and Prim, and Yorick, down to Dr. Slop, and Widow Wadman, and Mrs. Bridget, and Obadiah himself! Who would resign any one of them, or any part of any one of them? The deliberate fantasies of his manner are inextricably part of his charm. That charm consists primarily in a half-pathetic, half-humorous tone of emotion, in a peculiar kind of *sentiment*.

GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

Standing apart is what may be called our first genuine novel of domestic life, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, written in 1761, when its author, born in Ireland in 1728, was as yet an obscure doer of all work for the booksellers, but not published till 1766, when his name had already obtained celebrity by his poem of *The Traveller*. Assuming the grace of confession, or the advantage of the first word, Goldsmith himself introduces his performance by observing that there are a hundred faults in it; adding that a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. The case is hardly exactly as he puts it: the faults have compensating beauties, but are still faults. Never was there a story put together in such an inartificial, thoughtless, blundering way. It is little better than such a "concatenation accordingly" as satisfies one in a dream. It is not merely that everything is brought about by such sudden apparitions and transformations as only happen at the call of Harlequin's wand. But, in addition to this, probability, or we might almost say possibility, is violated at every step with little more hesitation or compunction than in a fairy tale. Yet there is that in the book which makes all this comparatively of little consequence; the inspiration and vital power of original genius, the charm of true feeling, some portion of the music of the great hymn of nature made audible to all hearts. Notwithstanding all its improbabilities, the story not only amuses us while we read, but takes root in the memory and affectionas s much almost as any story that was ever written. All of it that is essential lies in the development of the characters of the good vicar and his family, and they are one and all admirably brought out. He himself, simple and credulous, but also learned and clear-headed, so guileless and affectionate, sustaining so well all fortunes, so great both in suffering and in action, altogether so unselfish and noble-minded; his wife, of a much coarser grain, with her gooseberry-wine, and her little female vanities and schemes of ambition; the two girls, so unlike and yet so sister-like; the inimitable Moses, with his black ribbon, and his invincibility in argument and bargain-making; nor to be omitted the chubby-cheeked rogue little Bill, and the "honest veteran" Dick; the homely happiness of that fireside, upon which worldly misfortune can cast hardly a passing shadow; their little concerts, their dances; neighbour Flamborough's two rosy daughters, with their red top-knots; Moses's speculation in the green spectacles, and the vicar's own subsequent adventure (though running somewhat in the extravaganza style) with the same venerable arch-rogue, "with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes"; the immortal family pictures; and, like a sudden thunderbolt falling in the sunshine, the flight of poor passion-driven Olivia, her few distracted words as she stepped into the chaise, "O! what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!" and the heart-shivered old man's cry of anguish —"Now, then, my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more";—these, and other incidents and touches of the same kind, are the parts of the book that are remembered. Part of the charm of this novel of Goldsmith's, too, consists in the art of writing which he has displayed in it. The style, always easy, transparent, harmonious, and expressive, teems with felicities in the more heightened passages. And, finally, the humour of the book is all good-humour. There is scarcely a touch of ill-nature or even of satire in it from beginning to end—nothing of either acrimony or acid. Johnson has well characterized Goldsmith in his epitaph as *sive risus essent movendi sive lacrymæ, affectuum potens at lenis dominator*—a ruler of our affections, and mover alike of our laughter and our tears, as gentle as he is prevailing. With all his lovable qualities, he had also many weaknesses and pettinesses of personal character; but his writings are as free from any ingredient of malignity, either great or small, as those of any man. As the author, too, of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, published in 1765 and 1771, Goldsmith, who lived till 1774, holds a distinguished place among the poets of the middle portion of the last century. There is an earnestness and cordiality in his poetry which the school of Pope, to which, in its form at least, it belongs, had scarcely before reached. His miscellaneous verses include examples of witty occasional verse, like *Retaliation*. His work in *The Bee*, and the brilliant letter-studies called *The Citizen of the World* continue the development of the essay in a lively and delicately ironical fashion, while he brightens a somewhat quiet period in the history of comedy with *The Good-natured*

Man (1768), and the really amusing and delightful play *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). Goldsmith's versatility was remarkable, and his style was clear and equable in all that he wrote.

OTHER NOVELISTS

Among the minor novelists the most distinguished is Frances Burney (1752–1840), the favourite and pupil of Dr. Johnson. She brought to the novel a feminine gift of shrewd and picturesque observation of contemporary manners which indicated new possibilities to succeeding fiction-makers. *Evelina* (1778) is a most entertaining and vivacious picture of the times; *Camilla* (1796) and the *Wanderer* (1814) are duller and more Johnsonian; but her diaries, published under her married name of Madame d'Arblay, are pungent and amusing.

One or two curious novels are the isolated expressions of strange personalities. Such are the *Life of John Buncle, Esq.*, by Thomas Amory (1691–1788), an entirely individual and calmly discomposing book; and the finished *Vathek* (1783) of William Beckford, a thing of sombre magnificence in its Oriental excesses of pleasure and fear.

The novel of terror, like the sham Gothic and the tentative poetic revivals of the period, reveals the artistic taste of the nation blindly feeling its way back to Romance. Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Mrs. Radcliffe's series, of which the *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1795) is the most celebrated, and Matthew Lewis's *Monk*, overflowing with horrors,—are well-known examples. The novel of sensibility is continued by Henry Mackenzie in his *Man of Feeling* (1771), and the philosophical novel appears in Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794).

DRAMATIC WRITERS

The dramatic literature of the earlier part of the reign of George III. is very voluminous, but consists principally of comedies and farces of modern life, all in prose. Home, indeed, the author of *Douglas*, which came out in 1757, followed that first successful effort by about half-a-dozen other attempts in the same style, the last of which, entitled *Alfred*, was produced in 1778; but they were all failures. Horace Walpole's tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*, although privately printed in 1768, was never acted, and was not even published till many years after. The principal writers whose productions occupied the stage were Goldsmith, Garrick, and Foote, who all died in the earlier part of the reign of George III.; and Macklin, Murphy, Cumberland, Colman, Mrs. Cowley, and Sheridan, who mostly survived till after the commencement of the present century. Goldsmith's two capital comedies of the *Good-natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*, were brought out, the former in 1768, the latter in 1773. But the most brilliant contributions made to our dramatic literature in this age were Sheridan's celebrated comedies of *The Rivals*, brought out in 1775, when the author was only in his twenty-fifth year, *The Duenna*, which followed the same year, and *The School for Scandal*, which crowned the reputation of the modern Congreve, in 1777. After all that had been written, indeed, meritoriously enough in many instances, by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, these plays of Sheridan's were the only additions that had yet been made to the classic comedy of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. Sheridan's wit is as polished as Congreve's, and its flashes, if not quite so quick and dazzling, have a softer, a more liquid light; he may be said to stand between the highly artificial point and concentration of Congreve and the Irish ease and gaiety of Farquhar, wanting, doubtless, what is most characteristic of either, but also combining something of each. Sheridan had likewise produced all his other dramatic pieces—*The Trip to Scarborough*, *The Critic*, &c., before 1780; although he lived for thirty-six years after that date. The Sheridan comedy is thronged with amusing immortals like Bob Acres, Mrs. Malaprop, and Sir Fretful Plagiary: the dialogue flashes with happy wit.

WOMEN WRITERS

The direction of so large a portion of the writing talent of this age to the comic drama is an evidence of the extended diffusion of literary tastes and accomplishments among the class most conversant with those manners and forms of social life which chiefly supply the materials of modern comedy. To this period has been sometimes assigned the commencement of the pursuit of literature as a distinct profession in England; now, too, we may say, began its domestic cultivation among us—the practice of writing for the public as the occupation and embellishment of a part of that leisure which abounds in an advanced state of society, not only among persons possessing the means of living without exertion of any kind, but throughout the various grades of those who are raised above the necessity of labouring with their hands. Another indication of the same thing is the great increase that now took place in the number of female authors. To the names of Mrs. Cowley, Mrs. Sheridan, Mrs. Brooke, Mrs. Lennox, Miss Sophia Lee, and Miss Frances Burney, afterwards Madame d'Arblay, already mentioned, whose two first novels of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* appeared, the former in 1777, the latter in 1782, may be added, as distinguished in other kinds of writing than plays and novels, blind Anna Williams, Dr. Johnson's friend, whose volume of *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* was published in 1766; the learned Miss Elizabeth Carter, whose translation of Epictetus, however, and we believe all her other works, had appeared before the commencement of the reign of George III., although she lived till the year 1806; her friend, Miss Catherine Talbot, the writer of a considerable quantity both of prose and verse, now forgotten; Mrs. Montagu (originally Miss Elizabeth Robinson), the pupil of Dr. Conyers Middleton, and the founder of the Blue Stocking Club, whose once famous *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* was published in 1769, and who survived till the year 1800; Mrs. Chapone (Miss Hester Mulso), another friend of Miss Carter, and the favourite correspondent of Samuel Richardson, whose *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* appeared in 1773; Mrs. Macaulay (originally Miss Catherine Sawbridge, finally Mrs. Graham), the notorious republican historian and pamphleteer, whose *History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Restoration* was published in a succession of volumes between the years 1763 and 1771, and then excited much attention, though now neglected; and the other female democratic writer, Miss Helen Maria Williams, who did not, however, begin to figure as a politician till after the French Revolution, her only publications that fall to be noticed in this place being some volumes of verse which she gave to the world in 1782 and the two or three following years. Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Inchbald, whose *Simple Story* reflects her mercurial temperament in a staid mirror, and some other writers who did not reach the height of their reputation till later, had also entered upon the career of authorship within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. And to the commencement of that reign is to be assigned perhaps the most brilliant contribution from a female pen that had yet been added to that side of our literature, the *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, which, although written many years before, were first published in 1763, about a year after

Lady Mary's death. The fourth volume, indeed, did not appear till 1767.

PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS

To the latter part of the reign of George II. belongs the revival of the Periodical Essay, which formed so distinguishing a feature of our literature in the age of Anne. Political writing, indeed, in this form had been carried on from the era of the *Examiner*, and the *Englishman*, and the *Freeholder*, and Defoe's *Review* and *Mercator*, and the *British Merchant*, with little, if any intermission, in various publications; the most remarkable being *The Craftsman*, in which Bolingbroke was the principal writer, and the papers of which, as first collected and reprinted in seven volumes, extend from the 5th of December, 1726, to the 22nd of May, 1731; nor was the work dropped till it had gone on for some years longer. Some attempts had even been made during this interval to supply the place of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, by periodical papers, ranging, in the same strain, over the general field of morals and manners: Ambrose Philips, for instance, and a number of his friends, in the year 1718 began the publication of a paper entitled "*The Free-thinker, or Essays on Ignorance, Superstition, Bigotry, Enthusiasm, Craft*, &c., intermixed with several pieces of wit and humour designed to restore the deluded part of mankind to the use of reason and common-sense," which attracted considerable attention at the time, and was kept up till the numbers made a book of three volumes, which were more than once reprinted.

The Museum was another similar work, which commenced in 1746, and also ran to three volumes—Horace Walpole, Akenside, the two Wartons, and other eminent writers, being among the contributors. But nothing of this kind that was then produced has succeeded in securing for itself a permanent place in our literature. The next of our periodical works after *The Guardian* that is recognized as one of the classics of the language is *The Rambler*, the first number of which appeared on Tuesday, the 20th of March, 1750, the last (the 208th) on Saturday, the 14th of March, 1752, and all the papers of which, at the rate of two a week, with the exception only of three or four, were the composition of Samuel Johnson, who may be said to have first become generally known as a writer through this publication. *The Rambler* was succeeded by *The Adventurer*, edited and principally written by Dr. Hawkesworth, which was also published twice a week, the first number having appeared on Tuesday, the 7th of November, 1752, the last (the 139th) on Saturday, the 9th of March, 1754. Meanwhile *The World*, a weekly paper, had been started under the conduct of Edward Moore, the author of the *Fables for the Female Sex*, the tragedy of *The Gamester* and other dramatic productions, assisted by Lord Lyttelton, the Earls of Chesterfield, Bath, and Cork, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and other contributors: the first number appeared on Thursday, the 4th of January, 1753; the 209th, and last, on the 30th of December, 1756. And contemporary with *The World*, during a part of this space, was *The Connoisseur*, established and principally written by George Colman, in conjunction with Bonnell Thornton, a writer possessed of considerable wit and humour, which, however, he dissipated for the most part upon ephemeral topics, being only now remembered for his share in a translation of Plautus, also undertaken in concert with his friend Colman, the first two of the five volumes of which were published in 1766, two years before his death, at the age of forty-four. *The Connoisseur* was, like *The World*, a weekly publication, and it was continued in 140 numbers, from Thursday, the 31st of January, 1754, to the 30th of September, 1756. Mrs. Frances Brooke's weekly periodical work entitled *The Old Maid*, which subsisted from November, 1755, to July in the following year, is not usually admitted into the collections of the English essayists.

The next publication of this class which still holds a place in our literature is Johnson's *Idler*, which appeared once a week from Saturday, the 15th of April, 1758, to Saturday, the 5th of April, 1760. And with *The Idler* closes what may be called the second age of the English periodical essayists, which commences with *The Rambler*, and extends over the ten years from 1750 to 1760, the concluding decade of the reign of George II. After this occurs another long interval, in which that mode of writing was dropped, or at least no longer attracted either the favour of the public or the ambition of the more distinguished literary talent of the day; for no doubt attempts still continued to be made, with little or no success, by obscure scribblers, to keep up what had lately been so popular and so graced by eminent names. But we have no series of periodical papers of this time, of the same character with those already mentioned, that is still reprinted and read. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, occupied as it is with the adventures and observations of an individual, placed in very peculiar circumstances, partakes more of the character of a novel than of a succession of miscellaneous papers; and both the letters composing that work and the other delightful essays of the same writer were published occasionally, not periodically or at regular intervals, and only as contributions to the newspapers or other journals of the day,—not by themselves, like the numbers of *The Spectator*, *The Rambler*, and the other works of that description that have been mentioned. Our next series of periodical essays, properly so called, was that which began to be published at Edinburgh, under the name of *The Mirror*, on Saturday, the 23rd of January, 1779, and was continued at the rate of a number a week till the 27th of May, 1780. The conductor and principal writer of *The Mirror* was the late Henry Mackenzie, who died in Edinburgh, at the age of eighty-six, in 1831, the author of *The Man of Feeling*, published anonymously in 1771, *The Man of the World*, 1773, and *Julia de Roubigné*, 1777, novels after the manner of Sterne. *The Mirror* was succeeded, after an interval of a few years, by *The Lounger*, also a weekly paper, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of February, 1785, Mackenzie being again the leading contributor; the last (the 101st) on the 6th of January, 1787. But with these two publications the spirit of periodical essay-writing, in the style first made famous by Steele and Addison, expired also in Scotland, as it had already done a quarter of a century before in England.

POLITICAL WRITING.—WILKES; JUNIUS

A hotter excitement, in truth, had dulled the public taste to the charms of those ethical and critical disquisitions, whether grave or gay, which it had heretofore found sufficiently stimulating; the violent war of parties, which, after a lull of nearly twenty years, was resumed on the accession of George III., made political controversy the only kind of writing that would now go down with the generality of readers; and first Wilkes's famous *North Briton*, and then the yet more famous *Letters of Junius*, came to take the place of the *Ramblers* and *Idlers*, the *Adventurers* and *Connoisseurs*. *The North Briton*, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of June, 1762, was started in opposition to *The Briton*, a paper set up by Smollett in defence of the government on the preceding Saturday, the 29th of May, the day on which Lord Bute had been nominated first lord of the Treasury. Smollett and Wilkes had been friends up to this time; but the opposing papers were conducted in a spirit of the bitterest hostility, till the discontinuance of *The Briton* on the 12th of February, 1763, and the violent extinction of *The North Briton* on the 23rd of April following, fifteen days after the resignation of Bute, with the publication of its memorable "No. Forty-five." The celebrity of this one paper has preserved the memory of *The North Briton* to our day, in the same manner as in its own it produced several re-impressions of the whole work, which otherwise would probably have been as speedily and completely forgotten as the rival publication, and as the *Auditors* and *Monitors*, and other organs of the two factions, that in the same contention helped to fill the air with their din for a season, and then were heard of no more than any other quieted noise. Wilkes's brilliancy faded away when he proceeded to commit his thoughts to paper, as if it had dissolved itself in the ink. Like all convivial wits, or shining talkers, he was of course indebted for much of the effect he produced in society to the promptitude and skill with which he seized the proper moment for saying his good things, to the surprise produced by the suddenness of the flash, and to the characteristic peculiarities of voice, action, and manner with which the jest or repartee was set off, and which usually serve as signals or stimulants to awaken the sense of the ludicrous before its expected gratification comes; in writing, little or nothing of all this could be brought into play; but still some of Wilkes's colloquial impromptus that have been preserved are so perfect, considered in themselves, and without regard to the readiness with which they may have been struck out,—are so true and deep, and evince so keen a feeling at once of the ridiculous and of the real,—that one wonders at finding so little of the same kind of power in his more deliberate efforts. In all his published writings that we have looked into—and, what with essays, and pamphlets of one kind and another, they fill a good many volumes—we scarcely recollect anything that either in matter or manner rises above the veriest commonplace, unless perhaps it be a character of Lord Chatham, occurring in a letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton, some of the biting things in which are impregnated with rather a subtle venom. A few of his verses also have some fancy and elegance, in the style of Carew and Waller. But even his private letters, of which two collections have been published, scarcely ever emit a sparkle. And his House of Commons speeches, which he wrote beforehand and got by heart, are equally unenlivened. It is evident, indeed, that he had not intellectual lung enough for any protracted exertion or display. The soil of his mind was a hungry, unproductive gravel, with some gems imbedded in it. The author of the *Letters of Junius* made his *début* about four years after the expiration of *The North Briton*, what is believed to be his first communication having appeared in *The Public Advertiser* on the 28th of April, 1767; but the letters, sixty-nine in number, signed Junius, and forming the collection with which every reader is familiar, extend only over the space from the 21st of January, 1769, to the 2nd of November, 1771. Thus it appears that this celebrated writer had been nearly two years before the public before he attracted any considerable attention; a proof that the polish of his style was not really the thing that did most to bring him into notoriety; for, although we may admit that the composition of the letters signed Junius is more elaborate and sustained than that of the generality of his contributions to the same newspaper under the name of Brutus, Lucius, Atticus, and Mnemon, yet the difference is by no means so great as to be alone sufficient to account for the prodigious sensation at once excited by the former, after the slight regard with which the latter had been received for so long a time. What, in the first instance at least, more than his rhetoric, made the unknown Junius the object of universal interest, and of very general terror, was undoubtedly the quantity of secret intelligence he showed himself to be possessed of, combined with the unscrupulous boldness with which he was evidently prepared to use it. As has been observed, "ministers found, in these letters, proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them." It was immediately perceived in the highest circle of political society that the writer was either actually one of the members of the government, or a person who by some means or other had found access to the secrets of the government. And this suspicion, generally diffused, would add tenfold interest to the mystery of the authorship of the letters, even where the feeling which it had excited was one of mere curiosity as it would be, of course, with the mass of the public. But, although it was not his style alone, or even chiefly, that made Junius famous, it is probably that, more than anything else, which has preserved his fame to our day. More even than the secret, so long in being penetrated, of his real name: that might have given occasion to abundance of conjecture and speculation, like the problem of the Iron Mask and other similar enigmas; but it would not have prompted the reproduction of the letters in innumerable editions, and made them, what they long were, one of the most popular and generally read books in the language, retaining their hold upon the public mind to a degree which perhaps never was equalled by any other literary production having so special a reference, in the greater part of it, to topics of a temporary nature. The history of literature attests, as has been well remarked, that power of expression is a surer preservative of a writer's popularity than even strength of thought itself; that a book in which the former exists in a remarkable degree is almost sure to live, even if it should have very little else to recommend it. The style of Junius is wanting in some of the more exquisite qualities of eloquent writing; it has few natural graces, little variety, no picturesqueness; but still it is a striking and peculiar style, combining the charm of high polish with great nerve and animation, clear and rapid, and at the same time sonorous,—masculine enough, and yet making a very imposing display of all the artifices of antithetical rhetoric. As for the spirit of these famous compositions, it is a remarkable attestation to the author's power of writing that they were long universally regarded as dictated by the very genius of English liberty, and as almost a sort of Bible, or heaven-inspired exposition, of popular principles and rights. They contain, no doubt, many sound maxims, tersely and vigorously expressed; but of profound or far-sighted political philosophy, or even of ingenious disquisition having the semblance of philosophy, there is as little in the *Letters of Junius* as there is in the *Diary of Dodington* or *of Pepys*; and, as for the writer's principles, they seem to be as much the product of mere temper, and of his individual animosities and spites, as even of his partisan habits and passions. He defends the cause of liberty itself in the spirit of tyranny; there is no generosity, or even common fairness, in his mode of combating; the newest lie, or private scandal, of the day serves as well, and as frequently, as anything else to point his sarcasm, or to arm with its vivid lightning the thunder of declamatory invective that resounds through his pages.

JOHNSON

The character of Junius was drawn, while the mysterious shadow was still occupying the public gaze with its handwriting upon the wall, by one of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, in a publication which made a considerable noise at the time, but is now very much forgotten: "Junius has sometimes made his satire felt; but let not injudicious admiration mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigour of the bow. He has sometimes sported with lucky malice; but to him that knows his company it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask. While he walks, like Jack the Giant-killer, in a coat of darkness, he may do much mischief with little strength. . . . Junius burst into notice with a blaze of impudence which has rarely glared upon the world before, and drew the rabble after him as a monster makes a show. When he had once provided for his safety by impenetrable secrecy, he had nothing to combat but truth and justice—enemies whom he knows to be feeble in the dark. Being then at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility; out of the reach of danger, he has been bold; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident. As a rhetorician, he has had the art of persuading when he seconded desire; as a reasoner, he has convinced those who had no doubt before; as a moralist, he has taught that virtue may disgrace; and, as a patriot, he has gratified the mean by insults on the high. Finding sedition ascendant, he has been able to advance it; finding the nation combustible, he has been able to inflame it. . . . It is not by his liveliness of imagery, his pungency of periods, or his fertility of allusions that he detains the cits of London and the boors of Middlesex. Of style and sentiment they take no cognizance; they admire him for virtues like their own, for contempt of order and violence of outrage, for rage of defamation and audacity of falsehood. . . . Junius is an unusual phenomenon, on which some have gazed with wonder, and some with terror; but wonder and terror are transitory passions. He will soon be more closely viewed, or more attentively examined; and what folly has taken for a comet, that from his flaming hair shook pestilence and war, inquiry will find to be only a meteor formed by the vapours of putrefying democracy, and kindled into flame by the effervescence of interest struggling with conviction: which, after having plunged its followers into a bog, will leave us inquiring why we regard it." Thus wrote, in his ponderous but yet vigorous way, Samuel Johnson, in his pamphlet entitled *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, published in 1771, in answer, as is commonly stated, to Junius's *Forty-second Letter*, dated the 30th of January in that year. Junius, although he continued to write for a twelvemonth longer, never took any notice of this attack; and Mrs. Piozzi tells us that Johnson "often delighted his imagination with the thoughts of having destroyed Junius." The lively lady, however, is scarcely the best authority on the subject of Johnson's *thoughts*, although we may yield a qualified faith to her reports of what he actually said and did. He may, probably enough, have thought, and said too, that he had beaten or silenced Junius, referring to the question discussed in his unanswered pamphlet; although, on the other hand, it does not appear that Junius was in the habit of ever noticing such general attacks as this: he replied to some of the writers who addressed him in the columns of the *Public Advertiser*, the newspaper in which his own communications were published, but he did not think it necessary to go forth to battle with any of the other pamphleteers by whom he was assailed, any more than with Johnson. The great lexicographer winds up his character of Junius by remarking that he cannot think his style secure from criticism, and that his expressions are often trite, and his periods feeble. The style of Junius, nevertheless, was probably to a considerable extent formed upon Johnson's own. It has some strongly marked features of distinction, but yet it resembles the Johnsonian style much more than it does that of any other writer in the language antecedent to Johnson.

Born in 1709, Johnson, who had while still resident in the country commenced his connection with the press by some work in the way of translation and magazine writing, came to London along with his friend and pupil, the afterwards celebrated David Garrick, in March, 1737. Forthwith he entered upon a career of authorship which extended over nearly half a century. His poem of *London*, an imitation of the *Third Satire* of Juvenal, appeared in 1738; his *Life of Savage*, in a separate form, in 1744 (having been previously published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*); his stately poem entitled *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, an imitation of Juvenal's *Tenth Satire*, in 1749; his tragedy of *Irene* (written before he came up to London) the same year; *The Rambler*, as already mentioned, between March, 1750, and March, 1752; his *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755; *The Idler* between April, 1758, and April, 1760; his *Rasselas* in 1759; his edition of *Shakespeare* in 1765; his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* in 1775; his *Lives of the Poets* in 1781; the intervals between these more remarkable efforts having given birth to many magazine articles, verses, and pamphlets, which cannot be here enumerated. His death took place on the 13th of December, 1784.

All the works the titles of which have been given may be regarded as having taken their place in our standard literature; and they form, in quantity at least, a remarkable contribution from a single mind. But Johnson's mind is scarcely seen at its brightest if we do not add to the productions of his own pen the record of his colloquial wit and eloquence preserved by his admirable biographer, Boswell, whose renowned work first appeared, in two volumes quarto, in 1790; having, however, been preceded by the *Journal of the Tour to the Hebrides*, which was published the year after Johnson's death. It has been remarked, with truth, that his own works and Boswell's *Life* of him together have preserved a more complete portraiture of Johnson, of his intellect, his opinions, his manners, his whole man inward and outward, than has been handed down from one age to another of any other individual that ever lived. Certainly no celebrated figure of any past time still stands before our eyes so distinctly embodied as he does. If we will try, we shall find that all others are shadows, or mere outlines, in comparison: they seem to skulk about at a distance in the shade, while he is there fronting us in the full daylight, so that we see not only his worsted stockings and the metal buttons on his brown coat, but every feature of that massive countenance, as it is solemnized by meditation or lighted up in social converse, as his whole frame rolls about in triumphant laughter, or, as Cumberland saw the tender-hearted old man, standing beside his friend Garrick's open grave, at the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and bathed in tears. A noble heroic nature was that of Samuel Johnson, beyond all controversy: not only did his failings lean to virtue's side—his very intellectual weaknesses and prejudices had something in them of strength and greatness; they were the exuberance and excess of a rich mind, not the stinted growth of a poor one. There was no touch of meanness in him: rude and awkward enough he was in many points of mere demeanour, but he had the soul of a prince in real generosity, refinement, and elevation.

Of a certain kind of intellectual faculty, too, his endowment was very high. His quickness of penetration, and readiness in every way, were probably as great as had ever been combined with the same solid qualities of mind. This happy union of opposite kinds of power was most complete, and only produced its full effect, in his colloquial displays, when, excited and unformalized, the man was really himself, and his strong nature forced its way onward without regard to anything but the immediate object to be achieved. In writing he is still the strong man, working away valiantly, but, as it were, with fetters upon his limbs, or a burden on his back; a sense of the conventionalities of his position seems to oppress him; his style becomes artificial and ponderous; the whole process of his intellectual exertion loses much of its elasticity and life; and, instead of hard blows and flashes of flame, there is too often, it must be confessed, a mere raising of clouds of dust and the din of inflated commonplace. Yet, as a writer there is much in Johnson that is of no common character. It cannot be said that the world is indebted to him for many new truths, but he has given novel and often forcible and elegant expression to some old ones; the spirit of his philosophy is never other than manly and high-toned, as well as moral; his critical speculations, if not always very profound, are frequently acute and ingenious, and in manner generally lively, not seldom brilliant. Indeed, it may be said of Johnson, with all his faults and shortcomings, as of every man of true genius, that he is rarely or ever absolutely dull. Even his *Ramblers*, which we hold to be the most indigestible of his productions, are none of them mere leather or prunella; and his higher efforts, his *Rasselas*, his *Preface to Shakespeare*, and many passages in his *Lives of the Poets*, are throughout instinct with animation, and full of an eloquence which sometimes rises almost to poetry. Even his peculiar style, whatever we may allege against it, bears the stamp of the man of genius; it was thoroughly his own; and it not only reproduced itself, with variations, in the writings of some of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, from Junius's *Letters* to Macpherson's *Ossian*, but, whether for good or for evil, has perceptibly influenced our literature, onwards to the present day. Some of the characteristics of the Johnsonian style, no doubt, may be found in older writers, but, as a whole, it must be regarded as the invention of Johnson. No sentence-making at once so uniformly clear and exact, and so elaborately stately, measured, and sonorous, had proceeded habitually from any previous English pen. The pomposity and inflation of Johnson's composition abated considerably in his own later writings, and, as the cumbering flesh fell off, the nerve and spirit increased: the most happily executed parts of the *Lives of the Poets* offer almost a contrast to the oppressive rotundity of the *Ramblers*, produced thirty years before; and some eminent writers of a subsequent date, who have yet evidently formed their style upon his, have retained little or nothing of what, to a superficial inspection, seem the most marked characteristics of his manner of expression.

BURKE

Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, in 1729; but he came over in 1750 to the British metropolis, and from this time he mostly resided in England till his death, in 1797. In 1756 he published his celebrated *Vindication of Natural Society*, an imitation of the style, and a parody on the philosophy, of Lord Bolingbroke; and the same year his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* In 1757 appeared anonymously his *Account of the European Settlements in America.* In 1759 came out the first volume of *The Annual Register*, of which he is known to have written, or superintended the writing of, the historical part for several years. His public life commenced in 1761, with the appointment of private secretary to the chief secretary for Ireland, an office which carried him back for about four years to his native country. In 1766 he became a member of the English House of Commons; and from that date almost to the hour of his death, besides his exertions as a front figure in the debates and other business of parliament, from which he did not retire till 1794, he continued to dazzle the world by a succession of political writings such as certainly had never before been equalled in brilliancy and power. We can mention only those of greatest note:—his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, published in 1770; his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in 1790; his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, in 1792; his *Letter to a Noble Lord on his Pension*, in 1796; his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, in 1796 and 1797; his *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority*, in 1797; besides his several great speeches, revised and sent to the press by himself; that on *American Taxation*, in 1774; that on *Conciliation with America*, in 1775; that on the *Economical Reform Bill*, in 1780; that delivered in the Guildhall at Bristol previous to his election, the same year; that on Mr. Fox's *India Bill*, in 1783; and that on the *Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, in 1785. Those, perhaps the most splendid of all, which he delivered at the bar of the House of Lords in 1788 and 1789, on the impeachment of Warren Hastings, have also been printed since his death from his own manuscript.

Burke was our first, and is still our greatest, writer on the philosophy of practical politics. The mere metaphysics of that science, or what we may call by that term for want of a better, meaning thereby all abstract speculation and theorizing on the general subject of government without reference to the actual circumstances of the particular country and people to be governed, he held from the beginning to the end of his life in undisguised, perhaps in undue, contempt. This feeling is as strongly manifested in his very first publication, his covert attack on Bolingbroke, as in his writings and speeches on the contest with the American colonies or in those on the French Revolution. He was, as we have said, emphatically a practical politician, and, above all, an English politician. In discussing questions of domestic politics, he constantly refused to travel beyond the landmarks of the constitution as he found it established; and the views he took of the politics of other countries were as far as possible regulated by the same principle. The question of a revolution, in so far as England was concerned, he did not hold to be one with which he had anything to do. Not only had it never been actually presented to him by the circumstances of the time; he did not conceive that it ever could come before him. He was, in fact, no believer in the possibility of any sudden and complete re-edification of the institutions of a great country; he left such transformations to Harlequin's wand and the machinists of the stage; he did not think they could take place in a system so mighty and so infinitely complicated as that of the political organization of a nation. A constitution, too, in his idea, was not a thing, like a steam-engine, or a machine for threshing corn, that could be put together and set up in a few weeks or months, and that would work equally well wherever it was set up; he looked upon it rather as something that must in every case grow and gradually evolve itself out of the soil of the national mind and character, that must take its shape in a great measure from the prevalent habits and feelings to which it was to be accommodated, that would not work or stand at all unless it thus formed an integral part of the social system to which it belonged.

The notion of a constitution artificially constructed, merely as it were fastened upon a country by bolts and screws, was to him much the same as the notion of a human body performing the functions of life with no other than such a separable artificial head stuck upon it. In the great fields of politics and religion, occupied as they are with men's substantial interests, Burke regarded inquiries into first principles as worse than vain and worthless, as much more likely to mislead and pervert than to afford instruction or right guidance; and it is remarkable that this feeling, though deepened and strengthened by the experience of his after-life, and, above all, exasperated by the events to which his attention was most strongly directed in his latest days into an intense dread and horror of the confusion and widespread ruin that might be wrought by the assumption of so incompetent a power as mere human ratiocination to regulate all things according to its own conceit, was entertained and expressed by him with great distinctness at the outset of his career. It was in this spirit, indeed, that he wrote his *Vindication of Natural Society*, with the design of showing how anything whatever might be either attacked or defended with great plausibility by the method in which the highest and most intricate philosophical questions were discussed by Lord Bolingbroke. He "is satisfied," he says in his Preface, "that a mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may very plausibly attack everything the most excellent and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticize the Creation itself; and that, if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might, with as good colour, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his Creation appear to many no better than foolishness."

On the other hand, within the boundary by which he conceived himself to be properly restrained, there never was either a more ingenious and profound investigator or a bolder reformer than Burke. He had, indeed, more in him of the orator and of the poet than of the mere reasoner; but yet, like Bacon, whom he greatly resembled in intellectual character, an instinctive sagacity and penetration generally led him to see where the truth lay, and then his boundless ingenuity supplied him readily with all the considerations and arguments which the exposition of the matter required, and the fervour of his awakened fancy with striking illustration and impassioned eloquence in a measure hardly to be elsewhere found incorporated with the same profoundness, extent, and many-sidedness of view. For in this Burke is distinguished from nearly all other orators, and it is a distinction that somewhat interferes with his mere oratorical power, that he is both too reflective and too honest to confine himself to the contemplation of only one side of any question he takes up: he selects, of course, for advocacy and inculcation the particular view which he holds to be the sound one, and often it will no doubt be thought by those who dissent from him that he does not do justice to some of the considerations that stand opposed to his own opinion; but still it is not his habit to overlook such adverse considerations; he shows himself at least perfectly aware of their existence, even when he possibly underrates their importance. For the immediate effect of his eloquence, as we have said, it might have been better if his mind had not been so Argus-eyed to all the various conflicting points of every case that he discussed—if, instead of thus continually looking before and after on all sides of him, and stopping, whenever two or more apparently opposite considerations came in his way, to balance or reconcile them, he could have surrendered himself to the one view with which his hearers were prepared strongly to sympathize, and carried them along with him in a whirlwind of passionate declamation. But, "born for the universe," and for all time, he was not made for such sacrifice of truth, and all high, enduring things, to the triumph of an hour. And he has not gone without his well-earned reward. If it was objected to him in his own day that, "too deep for his hearers," he

> "still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing while they thought of dining,"

that searching philosophy which pervades his speeches and writings, and is there wedded in such happy union to glowing words and poetic imagery, has rescued them from the neglect and oblivion that have overtaken all the other oratory and political pamphleteering of that day, however more loudly lauded at the time, and has secured to them an existence as extended as that of the language, and to their eloquence and wisdom whatever admiration and whatever influence and authority they may be entitled to throughout all coming generations.

It is a mistake to suppose that either imagination or passion is apt to become weaker as the other powers of the mind strengthen and acquire larger scope. The history of all the greatest poetical minds of all times and countries confutes this notion. Burke's imagination grew with his intellect, by which it was nourished, with his ever-extending realm of thought, with his constantly increasing experience of life and knowledge of every kind; and his latest writings are his most splendid as well as his most profound. Undoubtedly the work in which his eloquence is at once the most highly finished, and the most impregnated with philosophy and depth of thought, is his *Reflections on the French Revolution.* Burke reveals himself there as a master of consummate rhetoric. The gorgeous architecture, the flawless chain of argument, the imaginative vision, the subtle imagery and the noble cadence, sway the mind and soul with irresistible power.

METAPHYSICAL AND ETHICAL WRITERS.—BERKELEY; SHAFTESBURY; BUTLER; HUME, &C.

The most remarkable metaphysical and speculative works which had appeared in England since Locke's *Essay* were, Dr. Samuel Clarke's *Sermons on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1705, in which he expounded his famous *à priori* argument for the existence of a God; Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*, 1709; his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710, in which he announced his argument against the existence of matter; his *Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous*, 1713; his *Alciphron*, or *The Minute Philosopher*, 1732; his *Analyst*, 1734; the Earl of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times*, first published in the form in which we now have them in 1713, after the author's death; Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, 1714; Dr. Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 1725; Andrew Baxter's *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, 1730 (?); Bishop Butler's *Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*, 1726; and his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, 1736.

Of these works, we must recall Bishop Berkeley's, since they marked a distinct stage in metaphysics and idealistic philosophy, and Butler's *Analogy* for its influence on religious thought. Berkeley's opposite in so many qualities of mind, David Hume, who was born in 1711, and died in 1776, and who has gained a high place in two very distinct fields of intellectual and literary enterprise, commenced his literary life by the publication of his *Treatise on Human Nature*, in 1739. The work, which, as he has himself stated, was projected before he left college, and written and published not long after, fell, to use his own words, "dead-born from the press"; nor did the speculations it contained attract much more attention when re-published ten years after in another form under the title of *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*; but they eventually proved perhaps more exciting and productive, at least for a time, both in this and in other countries, than any other metaphysical views that had been promulgated in modern times. Hume's *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* appeared in 1752, his *Natural History of Religion* in 1755; and with the latter publication he may be regarded as having concluded the exposition of his sceptical philosophy.

Among the most distinguished writers on mind and morals that appeared after David Hume within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. may be mentioned Hartley, whose *Observations on Man*, in which he unfolded his hypothesis of the association of ideas, were published in 1749; Lord Kames (Henry Home), whose *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* were published in 1752; Adam Smith, whose *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was published in 1759; Reid, whose *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* was published in 1764; Abraham Tucker (calling himself Edward Search, Esq.), the first part of whose *Light of Nature Pursued* was published in 1768, the second in 1778, after the author's death; and Priestley, whose new edition of Hartley's work, with an Introductory Dissertation, was published in 1775; his *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry*, the same year; and his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, in 1777. We may add to the list Campbell's able *Dissertation on Miracles*, in answer to Hume, which appeared in 1763; and Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, noticed in a former page, which appeared in 1770, and was also, as everybody knows, an attack upon the philosophy of the great sceptic.

HISTORICAL WRITERS.—HUME; ROBERTSON; GIBBON

History was one of the special developments of eighteenth-century prose. In the latter part of his literary career Hume struck into altogether another line, and the subtle and daring metaphysician suddenly came before the world in the new character of an historian. He appears, indeed, to have nearly abandoned metaphysics very soon after the publication of his *Philosophical Essays*. In a letter to his friend Sir Gilbert Elliott, which, though without date, seems from its contents, according to Mr. Stewart, to have been written about 1750 or 1751, he says, "I am sorry that our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, politics, and literature have employed all my time."

The first volume of his *History of Great Britain*, containing the Reigns of James I. and Charles I., was published, in quarto, at Edinburgh, in 1754; the second, containing the Commonwealth and the Reigns of Charles II. and James II., at London, in 1757. According to his own account the former was received with "one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation"; and after the first ebullitions of the fury of his assailants were over, he adds, "what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion: Mr. Miller told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it." He was so bitterly disappointed, that, he tells us, had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, he had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, changed his name, and never more returned to his native country. However, after a little time, in the impracticability of executing this scheme of expatriation, he resolved to pick up courage and persevere, the more especially as his second volume was considerably advanced. That, he informs us, "happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received: it not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." The work, indeed, seems to have now rapidly attained extraordinary popularity. Two more volumes, comprehending the reigns of the princes of the House of Tudor, appeared in 1759; and the remaining two, completing the *History*, from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the accession of Henry VII., in 1762. And several new editions of all the volumes were called for in rapid succession. Hume makes as much an epoch in our historical as he does in our philosophical literature. His originality in the one department is as great as in the other; and the influence he has exerted upon those who have followed him in the same path has been equally extensive and powerful in both cases. His *History*, notwithstanding some defects which the progress of time and of knowledge is every year making more considerable, and some others which probably would have been much the same at whatever time the work had been written, has still literary merits of so high a kind that it must ever retain its place among our few classical works in this department. In narrative clearness, grace, and spirit it is not excelled by any completed historical work in English. It has besides the high charm of individuality, interesting us even in its most prejudiced passages by a tolerant candour and gentleness of nature, a charity for all the milder vices, an unaffected indifference to many of the common objects of human passion, and a contempt for their pursuers, never waxing bitter nor morose, and often impregnating the style and manner with a vein of the quietest but yet truest and richest irony.

William Robertson (1721–1793) was another notable historian, whose *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI.* was published at London in 1759; his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V.*, in 1769; and his *History of America*, in 1776. Robertson's style of narration, lucid, equable, and soberly embellished, took the popular ear and taste from the first. A part of the cause of this favourable reception is slyly enough indicated by Hume, in a letter which he wrote to Robertson himself on the publication of the *History of Scotland*:—"The great success of your book, besides its real merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the deference paid to established opinions. It gains also by its being your first performance, and by its surprising the public, who are not upon their guard against it. By reason of these two circumstances justice is more readily done to its merit, which, however, is really so great, that I believe there is scarce another instance of a first performance being so near perfection."[1] The applause, indeed, was loud and universal, from Horace Walpole to Lord Lyttelton, from Lord Mansfield to David Garrick. Nor did it fail to be renewed in equal measure on the appearance both of his *History of Charles V.* and of his *History of America.*

But the most magnificent history in English literature, a great work written in the great style, is that of Edward Gibbon (1737–1794). The first volume of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared in 1776, a few months before the death of Hume, and about a year before the publication of Robertson's *America*; the second and third followed in 1781; the three additional volumes, which completed the work, not till 1788. Gibbon's *Autobiography* is also a living piece of literature. Of the first volume of his history, the author tells us, "the first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and a scarcely diminished interest followed the great undertaking to its close, notwithstanding the fear which he expresses in the preface to his concluding volumes that "six ample quartos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the public." A performance at once of such extent, and of so sustained a brilliancy throughout, perhaps does not exist in ancient or modern historical literature; but it is a kind of brilliancy, which even the extraordinary interest of the subject and the unflagging animation of the writer, with the great skill he shows in the disposition of his materials, hardly prevent from becoming sometimes fatiguing and oppressive. Still the splendour is very imposing; and it is supported everywhere by a profusion of real erudition such as would make the dullest style and manner interesting. More recent research has impaired little of Gibbon's narrative. Few modern historians can attain the great unity of his conception; and the resounding march of his style will persist no doubt in being heard through the ages.

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[1] *Account of the Life and Writings of Robertson*, by Dugald Stewart.

POLITICAL ECONOMY; THEOLOGY; CRITICISM AND BELLES LETTRES

Besides his metaphysical and historical works, upon which his fame principally rests, the penetrating and original genius of Hume also distinguished itself in another field, that of economical speculation which had for more than a century before his time to some extent engaged the attention of inquirers in this country. There are many ingenious views upon this subject scattered up and down in his *Political Discourses*, and his *Moral and Political Essays.* Other contributions, not without value, to the science of political economy, for which we are indebted to the middle of the last century, are the Rev. R. Wallace's *Essay on the Numbers of Mankind*, published at Edinburgh in 1753: and Sir James Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, which appeared in 1767. But these and all other preceding works on the subject have been thrown into the shade by Adam Smith's celebrated *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, which, after having been long expected, was at last given to the world in the beginning of the year 1776. It is interesting to learn that this crowning performance of his friend was read by Hume, who died before the close of the year in which it was published: a letter of his to Smith is preserved, in which, after congratulating him warmly on having acquitted himself so as to relieve the anxiety and fulfil the hopes of his friends, he ends by saying, "If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. . . . But these, and a hundred other points, are fit only to be discussed in conversation. I hope it will be soon, for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay." Smith survived till July, 1790. The writers of letters and memoirs are also among the liveliest and most picturesque prose-writers of the period. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1761) has been already praised for her wise and witty presentation of life in England and Continental countries. Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* are keen with shrewd and satirical judgment of life, though they are limited in their outlook, and cynical in tone. Horace Walpole, born 1717, in his mass of letters and memoirs presents his century with a zest, picturesqueness and witty certitude that bring him near genius. In quite another vein, the famous political *Letters of Junius* (1769–1772) have already been mentioned at due length; and only a word is necessary here. They have been attributed to many people, but chiefly to Sir Philip Francis. The epistles, which appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, were a fierce indictment of the government of the day; but their fierce malignity and their unscrupulously rhetorical character has tended to spoil them for posterity.

A few other names, more or less distinguished in the literature of this time, we must content ourselves with merely mentioning: in theology, Warburton, Lowth, Horsley, Jortin, Madan, Paley, Gerard, Blair, Geddes, Lardner, Priestley; in critical and grammatical disquisition, Harris, Monboddo, Kames, Blair, Jones; in antiquarian research, Walpole, Hawkins, Burney, Chandler, Barrington, Steevens, Pegge, Farmer, Vallancey, Grose, Grough; in the department of the belles lettres and miscellaneous speculation, Chesterfield, Hawkesworth, Brown, Godwin, Jenyns, Bryant, Hurd, Melmoth, Potter, Francklin, and Gilbert White the nature-lover.

THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Cowper (1731–1800)

The death of Samuel Johnson, in the end of the year 1784, makes a pause, or point of distinction, in our literature, hardl less notable than the acknowledgment of the independence o America, the year before, makes in our political history. It was not only the end of a reign, but the end of kingship altogether, in our literary system. For King Samuel has had no successor; nobody since his day, and that of his contemporary Voltaire, who died in 1778, at the age of eighty-five, has sat on a throne of literature either in England or in France.

William Cowper, born in 1731, twenty-three years before Crabbe,—we pass over his anonymous contributions to his friend the Rev. Mr. Newton's collection of the *Olney Hymns*, published in 1776,—gave to the world the first volume of his poems, containing those entitled *Table-Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Expostulation*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, and *Retirement*, in 1782; his famous *History of John Gilpin* appeared the following year, without his name, in a publication called *The Repository*, his second volume, containing *The Task*, *Triocinium*, and some shorter pieces, was published in 1785; his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in 1791; and his death took place on the 25th of April, 1800. It is recorded that Cowper's first volume attracted little attention. Most of his life was spent in retirement with friends at Olney, and marred by insanity. Yet surely there were both a force and a freshness of manner in the new aspirant that might have been expected to draw some observation. Nor had there of late been such plenty of good poetry produced in England as to make anything of the kind a drug in the market. On the whole, verse of such bone and muscle had proceeded from no recent writer,—not excepting Churchill, whose poetry had little else than its coarse strength to recommend it, and whose hasty and careless workmanship Cowper, while he had to a certain degree been his imitator, had learned, with his artistical feeling, infinitely to surpass. But Cowper, neglected at first, has taken his place as one of the classics of the language.

Notwithstanding his obligations both to Churchill and Pope, a main characteristic of Cowper's poetry is its originality. Compared with almost any one of his predecessors, he was what we may call a natural poet. He often broke daringly through conventional forms and usages in his mode of writing. His themes were not more his own than his manner of expressing them. His principles of diction and versification were announced, in part, in the poem with which he introduced himself to the public, his *Table-Talk*, in which, having intimated his contempt for the "creamy smoothness" of modern fashionable verse, where sentiment was so often

> "sacrificed to sound,
> And truth cut short to make a period round,"

he exclaims,

> "Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
> Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
> That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
> Quite unindebted to the tricks of art."

But, although he despised the "tricks" of art, Cowper, like every great poet, was also an artist; and, with all its simplicity and naturalness, his style is the very reverse of a slovenly or irregular one. If his verse be not so highly polished as that of Pope,—who, he complains, has

> "Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler has his tune by heart,"—

it is in its own way nearly as "well disciplined, complete, compact," as he has described Pope's to be.

Not creative imagination, nor deep melody, nor even, in general, much of fancy or grace or tenderness, is to be met with in the poetry of Cowper; but yet it is not without both high and various excellence. Its main charm, and that which is never wanting, is its earnestness. This is a quality which gives it a power over many minds not at all alive to the poetical; but it is also the source of some of its strongest attractions for those that are. Hence its truth both of landscape-painting, and of the description of character and states of mind; hence its skilful expression of such emotions and passions as it allows itself to deal with; hence the force and fervour of its denunciatory eloquence, giving to some passages as fine an inspiration of the moral sublime as is perhaps anywhere to be found in didactic poetry. Hence, we may say, even the directness, simplicity, and manliness of Cowper's diction—all that is best in the form, as well as in the spirit, of his verse. It was this quality, or temper of mind, in short, that principally made him an original poet. Instead of repeating the unmeaning conventionalities and faded affectations of his predecessors, it led him to turn in some degree to the actual nature within him and around him, and there to learn both the truths he should utter and the words in which he should utter them.

After Cowper had found his proper audience, the qualities in his poetry that at first had most repelled ordinary readers rather aided its success. In particular, as we have said, its theological tone and spirit made it acceptable in quarters to which poetry of any kind had rarely penetrated, and where it may perhaps be affirmed that it keeps its ground chiefly perforce of this its most prosaic peculiarity; although, at the same time, it is probable that the vigorous verse to which his system of theology and morals has been married by Cowper has not been without effect in diffusing not only a more indulgent toleration but a truer feeling and love for poetry throughout what is called the religious world. Nor is it to be denied that the source of Cowper's own most potent inspiration is his theological creed. The most popular of his poems, and also certainly the most elaborate, is his *Task*; it abounds in that delineation of domestic and everyday life which interests everybody, in descriptions of incidents and natural appearances with which all are familiar, in the expression of sentiments and convictions to which the heart of the ordinary human being readily responds: it is a poem, therefore, in which the greatest number of readers find the greatest number of things to attract and attach them.

Cowper's poetry, not organ-toned, nor informed with any very rich or original music, any more than soaringly imaginative or gorgeously decorated, is of a style that requires the sustaining aid of rhyme: in blank verse it is apt to overflow in pools and shallows. And this is one among other reasons why, after all, some of his short poems, which are nearly all in rhyme, are perhaps what he has done best. His *John Gilpin*, universally known and universally enjoyed by his countrymen, young and old, educated and uneducated, and perhaps the only English poem of which this can be said, of course at once suggests itself as standing alone in the collection of what he has left us for whimsical conception and vigour of comic humour; but there is a quieter exercise of the same talent, or at least of a kindred sense of the ludicrous and sly power of giving it expression, in others of his shorter pieces. Tenderness and pathos, again distinguish his *Lines on receiving his Mother's Picture.*

The principal charm of what he has done best is a natural elegance, which is most perfect in what he has apparently written with the least labour, or at any rate with the least thought of rules or models. His letters to his friends, not written for publication at all, but thrown off in the carelessness of his hours of leisure and relaxation, have given him a high place among the prose classics of his country. Among his less successful performances were his translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in which he was straining to imitate a style not only unlike his own, but, unfortunately, quite as unlike that of his original.

Doubtless, much of Cowper's work appears stilted and conventional; his spirit was usually too feminine and self-distrustful to dare the new regions far. But the intimacy of his themes, in his tender and faithful landscape-painting, in his hunger for emotional realities in the stuff of poetry Cowper was a true romantic. And, though rarely, he does sometimes express an intensity of melancholy passion which out-does some of the declared Romantics. The *Castaway*, that sincere and terrible poem, is the last cry of Melancholia. In a more hushed and less hopeless note, the famous passage from *The Garden* quivers with sensitive emotion :—

> "I was a stricken deer that left the herd
> Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by One Who had Himself
> Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore,
> And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts
> He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live."

CRABBE (1754–1832)

George Crabbe occupies a curious position in this changing time,—that of a strong and unexpected realist. In the course of his laborious and difficult life he published *The Library* in 1781, *The Village* in 1783, *The Newspaper* in 1785. *The Parish Register* was followed by *The Borough* in 1810, and his two final works were *Tales in Verse*, 1812, and *Tales of the Hall*, 1819. Crabbe at once settled down to a fairly conventional use of the heroic couplet, though at crises of tragic emotion he can evoke a deeper music from the measure. It is in subject-matter that he is a startling innovator. The cruel agony of the poor, the grim actuality of the real Arcadia, the pangs of sufferers in the toils of sordid sin and shame, he presents with bleak sincerity and with intolerable powers of pathos.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

William Blake, who showed in his work an extraordinary independence of the influences of his time, whose chief end in life was the mystic vision, and whose other art was painting, is one of the most wonderful lyric poets in our literature. He began a life which was directly controlled, he believed, by spiritual guides, in London, 1757. His father was a small shopkeeper, who did not send this unusual boy to school, but left him to form his own culture from the reading of Swedenborg, Bœhme, and from the wisdom of Nature. He was sent to study engraving, worked much in Westminster Abbey, and read the Elizabethans and Chatterton. In 1783 he married his devoted wife Catherine Boucher; and, helped by Flaxman, published his *Poetical Sketches* in the following year. *Songs of Innocence*, curiously engraved on copper, with border decorations, and coloured by hand, appeared in 1789: the companion volume, *Songs of Experience*, not till 1794. Meanwhile the series of the "prophetic books," in which Blake built up a mythological system of sin and redemption of his own, ran their course. *The Book of Thel*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), *America*, *The Book of Urizen*, *The Song of Los*, *Jerusalem* (1804), *Milton*, *Vala* are among the finest.

After some sojourn at Felpham, under Hayley's patronage he returned to London in 1804, and devoted himself chiefly to pictorial work. For his kindly patron Linnell he produced work like the great series of illustrations to the book of Job. But he gradually weakened in health, and died in Fountain Court in 1827.

The Romantic ecstasy was first unsealed in Blake's lyrics, though his work sank into a kind of oblivion till it was rescued and understood by the Pre-Raphaelites. His best lyrics are entirely spontaneous and perfect in their impulse, yet their musical secrets are of the most profound and intimate kind. In their unison of startling childlike emotion, surprising imagery, and echoing cadence, they are still inexplicable in their beauty, and sometimes the peculiar cloudy mystery of his singular philosophy veils his verse with obscurity. Yet even the prophetic books, strange chaos as they seem to the imagination, are often relieved by noble verse and prose. Blake was indeed an astounding apparition among the comfortably-minded people of his time.

  Hear the voice of the Bard,
Who present, past, and future sees;
  Whose ears have heard
  The Holy Word
That walked among the ancient trees.

  Calling the lapsèd soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
  That might control
  The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew.

BURNS (1759–1796)

It was in October or November of the year 1786 that the press of the obscure country town of Kilmarnock gave to the world, in an octavo volume, the first edition of the *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, of Robert Burns. A second edition was printed at Edinburgh early in the following year. Burns, born on the 25th of January, 1759, had composed most of the pieces contained in this publication in the two years preceding its appearance: his life—an April day of sunshine and storm—closed on the 21st of July, 1796; and in his last nine or ten years he may have about doubled the original quantity of his printed poetry. He was not quite thirty-seven and a half years old when he died—about a year and three months older than Byron. Burns is the greatest peasant-poet that has ever appeared; but his poetry is most remarkable in itself. It is a poetry of very limited compass—not ascending towards any "highest heaven of invention," nor even having much variety of modulation, but yet in its few notes as true and melodious a voice of passion as was ever heard. Quite apart from the beauty of his lyric gift he is a most important figure in literary history, partly because he betrays so clearly the main influences of the Europe of his time, partly because of the composite character of his genius, simple and spontaneous as it may seem. The very freshness and frankness of his native dialect helped him to escape from the prevailing "diction" of English poetry. The words are almost always so apt and full of life, at once so natural and expressive, and so graceful and musical in their animated simplicity, that, were the matter ever so trivial, they would of themselves turn it into poetry. And the same native artistic feeling manifests itself in everything else. His poetry is, throughout, real emotion melodiously uttered. As such, it is as genuine poetry as was ever written or sung. Burns's head was as strong as his heart; his natural sagacity, logical faculty, and judgment were of a rich order; he had a substantial intellectual character. And the character of his poetry is like that of the mind and the nature out of which it sprung—instinct with passion, but also with power of mediation—full of light, as well as of fire. Hence the popularity of the poetry of Burns with all classes of his countrymen—a popularity more universal, probably, than any other writer ever gained, at least so immediately; for his name, we apprehend, had become a household word among all classes in every part of Scotland even in his own lifetime. Certainly at the present day, that would be a rare Lowland Scotchman, or Scotchwoman either, who should be found never to have heard of the name and fame of Robert Burns, or even to be altogether ignorant of his works. It has happened, however, from this cause, that he is not perhaps, in general, estimated by the best of his productions. Nobody, of course, capable of appreciating any of the characteristic qualities of Burns's poetry will ever think of quoting even the best of the few verses he has written in English, as evidence of his poetic genius. In these he is Samson shorn of his hair, and become as any other man. But even such poems as his *Cotter's Saturday Night* convey no adequate conception of what is brightest and highest in his poetry. Of a far rarer merit, much richer in true poetic light and colour and of a much more original and distinctive inspiration is a poem like that entitled *To a Mouse*, on turning her up in her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785.

A simple and common incident poetically conceived has rarely been rendered into expression more natural, delicately graceful, and true.

The proper companion to this short poem is that addressed *To a Mountain Daisy*, on turning one down with the Plough, in April, 1786; but in that the execution is not so pure throughout, and the latter part runs somewhat into commonplace.

The most brilliant comic power, again, animates the pieces entitled *Scotch Drink*, *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, *Tam o' Shanter*, the *Holy Fair*, the *Ordination*, and others of his more irreverent or reckless effusions. As a picture of manners, however, his *Hallowe'en* is Burns's greatest performance—with its easy vigour, its execution absolutely perfect, its fulness of various and busy life, the truth and reality throughout, the humour diffused over it like sunshine ever and anon flashing forth in changeful or more dazzling light, the exquisite feeling and rendering both of the whole human spirit of the scene, and also of its accessories in what we can scarcely call inanimate nature: some minds again have found in the reckless realism and the wild zest of the *Jolly Beggars*, another kind of masterpiece.

But Burns's supreme gift was his lyric temper, a joy in song which seemed careless as the rapture of a bird, and which was yet wise and deliberate enough to select from the mass of traditional folk-song all that could aid or enrich his inspiration. Ramsay, Isobel Pagan, Lady Anne Barnard, Ferguson, also tried to enter into the traditional continuity of Scottish verse. But only Burns could so have summed up in his work all the floating half-conscious oral literature of his own people and his own peasant kind. Even out of his own country, his songs, to be sure, have taken all hearts—and they are the very flame-breath of his own. This is, indeed, the poetry of the heart. Burns's songs do not at all resemble the exquisite lyrical snatches with which Shakespeare, and also Beaumont and Fletcher, have sprinkled some of their dramas—enlivening the busy scene and progress of the action as the progress of the wayfarer is enlivened by the voices of birds in the hedgerows, or the sight and scent of wild flowers that have sprung up by the roadside. They are never in any respect exercises of ingenuity, but always utterances of passion, and seem simple and direct as a shout of laughter or a gush of tears. Whatever they have of fancy, whatever they have of melody, is born of real emotion—is merely the natural expression of the poet's feeling at the moment, seeking and finding vent in musical words. Little poetry has been produced so thrillingly tender as some of the best of these songs—

> "Ae[1] fond kiss, and then we sever;
> Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
>
> . . . .
>
> Had we never loved sae kindly,
> Had we never loved sae blindly,
> Never met, or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.
> Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
> Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
>
> . . . .
>
> Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
> Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!"

In all, indeed, that he has written best, Burns may be said to have given us himself—the passion or sentiment which swayed or possessed him at the moment—almost as much as in his songs. In him the poet was the same as the man. He could describe with admirable fidelity and force incidents, scenes, manners, characters, or whatever else, which had fallen within his experience or observation; but he had little proper dramatic imagination, or power of going out of himself into other natures, and, losing his personality in the creations of his fancy. His blood was too hot, his pulse beat too tumultuously, for that; at least he was during his short life too much the sport both of his own passions and of many other stormy influences to acquire such power of intellectual self-command and self-suppression. What he might have attained to if a longer earthly existence had been granted to him—or a less tempestuous one—who shall say? Both when his genius first blazed out upon the world, and when its light was quenched by death, it seemed as if he had been born or designed to do much more than he has done. Having written what he wrote before his twenty-seventh year, he had doubtless much more additional poetry in him than he gave forth between that date and his death at the age of thirty-seven.

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[1] One.

OTHER POETS

The minor poets of this era are almost dead to the present generation. William Bowles printed some sonnets in 1789, the mild sentimentality of which made much impression on Coleridge. William Gifford edited the *Anti-Jacobin* in which much clever satirical verse appeared. John Hookham Frere (1760–1846), is the author of the witty burlesque known as *Whistlecraft*. Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1789–1792), is an array of mechanically polished but perfectly dead couplets. William Hayley (1745–1820), is now a by-word for amiable ineffectiveness in literature.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

It might almost seem as if there were something in the impressiveness of the great chronological event formed by the termination of one century and the commencement of another that had been wont to act with an awakening and fructifying power upon literary genius in these islands. Of the three last great sunbursts of our literature, the first, making what has been called the Elizabethan age of our dramatic and other poetry, threw its splendour over the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth century; the second, famous as the Augustan age of Anne, brightened the earlier years of the eighteenth; the nineteenth century was ushered in by the third. At the termination of the reign of George III., in the year 1820, there were still among us, not to mention minor names, at least nine or ten poets, each commanding universal attention from the reading world:—Crabbe (to take them in the order of their seniority), Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, and perhaps we ought to add Keats, though more for the shining promise of his great genius than for what he had actually done. Many other voices there were from which divine words were often heard, but these were oracles to whom all listened, whose inspiration all men acknowledged. However the fact is to be explained or accounted for, it does indeed look as if Nature in this, as in other things, had her times of production and of comparative rest and inactivity—her autumns and her winters—or, as we may otherwise conceive it, her alternations of light and darkness, of day and night. After a busy and brilliant period of some thirty or forty years, there has always followed in every country a long term during which the literary spirit, as if overworked and exhausted, has manifested little real energy or power of life, and even the very demand and taste for the highest kind of literature, for depth, and subtlety, and truth, and originality, and passion, and beauty, has in a great measure ceased with the supply—a sober and slumbrous twilight of imitation and mediocrity, and little more than mechanical dexterity in bookmaking, at least with the generality of the most popular and applauded writers.

After all, the reawakening of our English literature, on each of the three occasions we have mentioned, was probably brought about mainly by the general political and social circumstances of the country and of the world at the time. The poetical and dramatic wealth and magnificence of the era of Elizabeth and James came, no doubt, for the most part, out of the passions that had been stirred and the strength that had been acquired in the mighty contests and convulsions which filled, here and throughout Europe, the middle of the sixteenth century; another breaking up of old institutions and re-edification of the state upon a new foundation and a new principle, the work of the last sixty years of the seventeenth century, if it did not contribute much to train the wits and fine writers of the age of Anne, at least both prepared the tranquillity necessary for the restoration of literature, and disposed the public mind for its enjoyment; the poetical dayspring, finally, that came with our own century was born with, and probably in some degree out of, a third revolution, which shook both established institutions and the minds and opinions of men throughout Europe as much almost as the Reformation itself had done three centuries and a half before. It is also to be observed that on each of these three occasions the excitement appears to have come to us in part from a foreign literature which had undergone a similar reawakening, or put forth a new life and vigour, shortly before our own: in the Elizabethan age the contagion or impulse was caught from the literature of Italy; in the age of Anne from that of France; in the so-called Romantic period from that of Germany.

THE LAST AGE OF THE GEORGES

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL OF POETS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

This new-found inspiration produced a marked effect, in the poetry of Wordsworth. Romanticism is a term used to indicate a love of strange emotion, of novel pictorial and musical effects, a sense of the charm of the past, a supreme homage to the spirit of pure imagination, and a certain attitude to Nature. William Wordsworth, always considered as one of the great leaders of the romantic revival, did not include all these elements in his verse, but he is the nature-prophet above all. Wordsworth, who was born in 1770, has preserved in the editions of his collected works some of his verses written so long ago as 1786; and he also continued to the last to reprint the two earliest of his published poems, entitled *An Evening Walk*, addressed to a Young Lady, from the Lakes of the North of England, and *Descriptive Sketches*, taken during a pedestrian tour among the Alps, both of which first appeared in 1793. But the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, which are both written in the usual rhyming ten-syllabled verse, are perfectly orthodox eighteenth-century poems, according to the common creed, in spirit, manner, and form. The peculiarities which are conceived to constitute what is called the Lake manner first appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads*; the first volume of which was published in 1798, the second in 1800.

In the Preface to the second volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the author himself described his object as being to ascertain how far the purposes of poetry might be fulfilled "by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." It might, perhaps, be possible to defend this notion by the aid of certain assumptions as to what is implied in a state of vivid sensation, which it may be contended is only another phrase for a state of poetical excitement: undoubtedly the language of a mind in such a state, selected, or collected, and made metrical, will be poetry. It is almost a truism to say so. Nay, we might go farther, and assert that, in the circumstances supposed, the selection and the adaptation to metrical arrangement would not be necessary; the language would flow naturally into something of a musical shape (that being one of the conditions of poetical expression), and, although it might be improved by correction, it would have all the essentials of poetry as it was originally produced. But what is evidently meant is, that the real or natural language of any and every mind when simply in a state of excitement or passion is necessarily poetical. The doctrine differs from that commonly held in that it assumes mere passion or vivid sensation to be in all men and in all cases substantially identical with poetical excitement, and the language in which passion expresses itself to be consequently always poetry, at least after it has undergone some purification or pruning, and been reduced to metrical regularity. As for this qualification, we may remark that it must be understood to mean nothing more than that the language of passion is improved with reference to poetical effect by being thus trained and regulated: otherwise the statement would be contradictory and would refute itself; for, if passion, or vivid sensation, always speaks in poetry, the metrical arrangement and the selection are unnecessary and unwarrantable; if these operations be indispensable, the language of vivid sensation is not always poetry. But surely it is evident from the nature of the thing that it is altogether a misconception of what poetry is to conceive it to be nothing more than the language naturally prompted by passion or strong emotion. If that were all, all men, all women, and all children would be poets. Poetry, in the first place, is an art, just as painting is an art: and the one is no more to be practised solely under the guidance of strong emotion than the other. Secondly, poetical emotion is something as distinct from mere ordinary passion or excitement as is musical emotion, or the feeling of the picturesque or the beautiful or the grand in painting or in architecture; the one may and often does exist where there exists nothing of the other. Nobody has ever thought of defining music to be merely the natural vocal utterance of men in a state of vivid sensation, or painting to be nothing more than their natural way of expressing themselves when in such a state by lines and colours: no more is poetry simply their real language, or expression by words, when in such a state. It makes no difference that words are a mode of expression of which men have much more generally the use than they have the use of either colours or musical sounds; if all men could sing or could handle the brush, they still would not all be musicians and painters whenever they were in a passion.

We cannot say that Wordsworth's theory of poetry has been altogether without effect upon this practice, but it is not borne out by very much that he has written in express conformity with its requisitions. We might affirm, indeed, that its principle is as much contradicted and confuted by the greater part of his own poetry as it is by that of all languages and all times in which poetry has been written, or by the universal past experience of mankind in every age and country. He is a great poet, and has enriched our literature with much beautiful and noble writing, whatever be the method or principle upon which he evolves, or fancies that he evolves, his work. His *Laodamia*, his *Leech-gatherer*, his *Ruth*, his *Tintern Abbey*, his *Feast of Brougham Castle*, the *Water Lily*, the greater part of the *Excursion*, most of the *Sonnets*, his great *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood*, and many of his shorter lyrical pieces, are nearly as perfect in diction as they are deep and true in feeling, judged by any rules or principles of art that are followed by his compeers. Even the errors of Wordsworth's poetical creed and practice, the excess to which he has sometimes carried his employment of the language of the uneducated classes, and his attempts to extract poetical effects out of trivial incidents and humble life, were fitted to be rather serviceable than injurious in the highly artificial state of our poetry when he began to write. He may not have succeeded in every instance in which he has tried to glorify the familiar and elevate the low, but he has nevertheless taught us that the domain of poetry is much wider and more various than it used to be deemed, that there is a great deal of it to be found where it was formerly little the fashion to look for anything of the kind, and that the poet does not absolutely require for the exercise of his art and the display of his powers what are commonly called illustrious or distinguished characters, and an otherwise dignified subject, any more than long and learned words. Among his English contemporaries Wordsworth stands foremost and alone as the poet of common life. It is not his only field, nor perhaps the only field in which he is greatest: but it is the one which is most exclusively his own. He has, it is true, no humour or comedy of any kind in him (which is perhaps the explanation of the ludicrous touches that sometimes startle us in his serious poetry), and therefore he is not, and seldom attempts to be, what Burns was for his countrymen, the poetic interpreter, and, as such, refiner as well as embalmer, of the wit and merriment of the common people: but of whatever is more tender or more thoughtful in the spirit of ordinary life in England the poetry of Wordsworth is the truest and most comprehensive transcript we possess. He compelled his century to realize anew the central mysteries of life,—of childhood, of motherhood, of sincere and noble conduct. Many of his verses, embodying as they do the philosophy as well as the sentiment of this everyday human experience, have a completeness and impressiveness, the force of which is universally felt, and which has already worked them into the texture and substance of the language to a far greater extent, we apprehend, than has happened in the case of any contemporary writer.

The following poem, entitled *The Affliction of Margaret*, dated 1804, and classed among the Poems founded on the Affections, is one of his nobly impassioned lyrics of common life:—

Where art thou, my beloved son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled, by inhuman men ;
Or thou, upon a desert thrown,
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me :—'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass ;
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend !

The most intense and mystical expression of that nature-worship we have learned to associate with Wordsworth's name is found in *Tintern Abbey*.

A group of poems in the heroic manner, written with great dignity of style and splendour of sound, includes his noble *Laodamia*, dated 1814, and in the later editions placed among what he calls Poems of the Imagination, though formerly classed as one of the Poems founded on the Affections.

The same grand strain marks the best both of Wordsworth's earlier and later poetry. Neither puerility nor over-familiarity of diction, with whatever other faults they may be chargeable, can well be attributed to either the *Excursion*, or the *Sonnets*, or the *Odes*. The *Prelude*, or Introduction to the *Recluse* (intended to consist of three Parts, of which the *Excursion* is the second), which was begun in 1799 and completed in 1805, although not published till a few months after the author's death in 1850, is an elaborate poem, in fourteen books, of eminent interest as the poet's history of himself, and of the growth of his own mind, as well as on other accounts, and long before characterized by Coleridge, to whom it is addressed as—

> "An Orphic song indeed,
> A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
> To their own music chanted."

In the *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge separated out the great elements of the genius of his friend, and revealed what differentiated him from other poets. "It was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying the objects observed; and, above all, the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world, around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dewdrops. To find no contradiction in the union of old and new, to contemplate the Ancient of Days and all His works with feelings as fresh as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat, characterizes the mind that feels the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it. To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years have made familiar; this is the character and privilege of genius."

COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is much more completely than Wordsworth, a romantic poet. Coleridge, born in 1772, published the earliest of his poetry that is now remembered in 1796, in a small volume containing also some pieces by Charles Lamb, to which some by Charles Lloyd were added in a second edition the following year. It was not till 1800, after he had produced and printed separately his *Ode to the Departing Year* (1796), his noble ode entitled *France* (1797), his *Fears in Solitude* (1798), and his translations of both parts of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, that he was first associated as a poet and author with Wordsworth, in the second volume of whose *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1800, appeared, as the contributions of an anonymous friend, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, *Foster Mother's Tale*, *Nightingale*, and *Love*. "I should not have requested this assistance," said Wordsworth, in his preface, "had I not believed that the poems of my friend would, in a great measure, have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance, in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide." Coleridge's own account, however, is somewhat different. In his *Biographia Literaria*, he tells us that, besides the *Ancient Mariner*, he was preparing for the conjoint publication, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which he should have more nearly realized his ideal than he had done in his first attempt, when the volume was brought out with so much larger a portion of it the produce of Wordsworth's industry than his own, that his few compositions, "instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter"; and then he adds, in reference to the long preface in which Wordsworth had expounded his theory of poetry, "With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them, and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but, on the contrary, objected to them as erroneous in principle and contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves."

The greater part of Coleridge's life and work was engaged in the diffusion of German metaphysics in English thought, and in the application of those philosophic ideas to other subjects. Incidentally he became one of our great critics in the *Biographia Literaria*, where he distinguished the Fancy from the Imagination and vindicated Wordsworthian verse.

Coleridge's poetry is remarkable for the perfection of its execution, for the exquisite art with which its divine spirit is endowed with formal expression. The subtly woven words, with all their sky colours, seem to grow out of the thought or emotion, as the flower from its stalk, or the flame from its feeding oil. The music of his verse, too, especially of what he has written in rhyme, is as sweet and as characteristic as anything in the language, placing him for that rare excellence in the same small band with Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher (in their lyrics), and Milton, and Collins, and Shelley, and Tennyson. It was probably only quantity that was wanting to make Coleridge the greatest poet of his day. Certainly, at least, some things that he has written have not been surpassed, if they have been matched, by any of his contemporaries.

The following little picture, entitled *Time, Real and Imaginary*, is a gem worthy of the poet in the most thoughtful and philosophic strength of his faculties :—

> On the wide level of a mountain's head
> (I knew not where, but 'twas some fairy place),
> Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
> Two lovely children ran an endless race ;
>   A sister and a brother !
>   That far outstripped the other ;
> Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
> And looks and listens for the boy behind :
>   For he, alas ! is blind !
> O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
> And knows not whether he be first or last.

In a different manner, and more resembling that of these early poems in general, are many passages of great power in the *Monody on the Death of Chatterton.* And, among other remarkable pieces of a date not much later, might be mentioned the ode entitled *France*, written in 1797, which Shelley regarded as the finest ode in the language ; his ode entitled *Dejection* ; his blank verse lines entitled *The Nightingale* ; his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and his pleasing verses entitled *Love.* His translation of *Wallenstein*, again, is considered finer than Schiller's original.

Of Coleridge's poetry, in its most matured form and in its best specimens, the most distinguishing characteristics are vividness of imagination and subtlety of thought, combined with unrivalled beauty and expressiveness of diction, and the most exquisite melody of verse. With the exception of a vein of melancholy and meditative tenderness, flowing rather from a contemplative survey of the mystery—the strangely mingled good and evil—of all things human, than connected with any individual interests, there is not in general much of passion in his compositions, and he is not well fitted, therefore, to become a very popular poet or a favourite with the multitude. His love itself, warm and tender as it is, is still Platonic and spiritual in its tenderness, rather than a thing of flesh and blood. Coleridge was "of imagination *all* compact." The fault of his poetry is the same as belongs to that of Spenser ; it is too purely or unalloyedly poetical. But rarely, on the other hand, has there existed an imagination in which so much originality and daring were associated and harmonized with so gentle and tremblingly delicate a sense of beauty. Some of his minor poems especially, for the richness of their colouring combined with the most perfect finish, can be compared only to the flowers which spring up into loveliness at the touch of "great creating nature." The words, the rhyme, the whole flow of the music seem to be not so much the mere expression or sign of the thought as its blossoming or irradiation—of the bright essence the equally bright though sensible effluence.

In most of Coleridge's latest poetry, however, along with this perfection of execution, in which he was unmatched, we have more of the inspiration of the heart mingling with that of the fancy. The following lines are entitled *Work without Hope*, and are stated to have been composed 21st February, 1827 :—

All nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring !
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not ! Glide, rich streams, away !
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll :
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

To about the same date belongs the exquisite *Youth and Age*. But it is as the poet of romantic imagination, as the magician summoning rich colour, mysterious wonder, and delicate supernatural sweetness and fear into the page, as the poet of *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel*, and the *Ancient Mariner*, that Coleridge has had most power over his successors in song.

SOUTHEY (1774–1843)

Coleridge died in 1834; his friend Robert Southey, born three years later, survived to 1843. If Coleridge wrote too little poetry, Southey may be said to have written too much and too rapidly. Southey, as well as Coleridge, has been popularly reckoned one of the Lake poets; but it is difficult to assign any meaning to that name which should entitle it to comprehend either the one or the other. Southey, indeed, was, in the commencement of his career, the associate of Wordsworth and Coleridge; a portion of his first poem, his *Joan of Arc*, published in 1796, was written by Coleridge; and he afterwards took up his residence, as well as Wordsworth, among the Lakes of Westmoreland. But, although in his first volume of minor poems, published in 1797, there was something of the same simplicity or plainness of style, and choice of subjects from humble life, by which Wordsworth sought to distinguish himself about the same time, the manner of the one writer bore only a very superficial resemblance to that of the other; whatever it was that gave its peculiar character to Wordsworth's poetry, it was wanting in Southey's; he was evidently, with all his ingenuity and fertility, and notwithstanding an ambition of originality which led him to be continually seeking after strange models, from Arabian and Hindoo mythologies to Latin hexameters, of a genius radically imitative, and not qualified to put forth its strength except while moving in a beaten track and under the guidance of long-established rules. Southey was by nature a conservative in literature as well as in politics, and the eccentricity of his Thalabas and Kehamas was as merely spasmodic as the Jacobinism of his *Wat Tyler.* But even *Thalaba* and *Kehama*, whatever they may be, are surely not poems of the Lake school. And in most of his other poems, especially in his latest epic, *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, Southey is in verse what he always was in prose, one of the most thoroughly and unaffectedly English of our modern writers. In his prose, as in his *Life of Nelson*, he was a master. His verse, however, is too like prose to be poetry of a very high order; it is flowing and eloquent, but has little of the distinctive life or lustre of poetical composition. There is some force and good rhetoric, however, in the *Curse of Kehama*, the most elaborate of his long poems.

WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832)

Walter Scott, as well as Wordsworth and Coleridge, was early a drinker at the fountain of German poetry; his commencing publication was a translation of Bürger's *Lenore* (1796), another was a rendering of Goethe's *Goetz ven Berlichingen*, and the spirit and manner of his original compositions were, from the first, evidently and powerfully influenced by what had thus awakened his poetical faculty. His robust and manly character of mind, however, and his strong nationalism, having led him to find in the ballads of his own country all the qualities which had most attracted him in his foreign favourites, with others which had an equal or still greater charm for his heart and fancy, he henceforth gave himself up almost exclusively to the more congenial inspiration of that native ballad-lore collected in the *Border Minstrelsy* (1802). His poems are all lays and romances of chivalry. With all their irregularity and carelessness (qualities which in some sort are characteristic of and essential to this kind of poetry), that element of life, that animation, fervour, enthusiasm,—call it by what name we will,—exists in great strength in the poetry of Scott, redeeming a thousand defects, and triumphing over much criticism. It was this, no doubt, more than anything else, which at once took the public admiration by storm. All cultivated and perfect enjoyment of poetry, or of any other of the fine arts, is partly emotional, partly critical; the enjoyment and appreciation are only perfect when these two qualities are blended; but most of the poetry that had been produced among us in modern times had aimed at affording chiefly, if not exclusively, a critical gratification. The *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) surprised readers of all degrees with a long and elaborate poem, which carried them onward with an excitement of heart as well as of head which many of them had never experienced before in the perusal of poetry. The narrative form of the poem no doubt did much to produce this effect, giving to it, even without the poetry, the interest and enticement of a novel; but all readers, even the least tinctured with a literary taste, felt also, in a greater or less degree, the charm of the verse, and the poetic glow with which the work was all alive. *Marmion* (1808) carried the same feelings to perhaps a higher pitch; though the more domestic attractions of the *Lady of the Lake* (1810) made it the most popular on its first appearance. Less successful were *Don Roderick* (1811), the *Bridal of Triermain*, and *Rokeby* (1813), the *Lord of the Isles* (1815), and *Harold the Dauntless.*

Meanwhile, Scott's great success, the example he had set, and the tastes which he had awakened in the public mind, had affected our literature to an extent in various directions which was not at once fully appreciated. Notwithstanding the previous appearance of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and some other writers, it was Scott who first in his day made poetry the rage, and with him properly commences the busy poetical production of the period we are now reviewing; those who had been in the field before him put on a new activity, and gave to the world their principal works, after his appearance; and it was not till then that the writer who of all the poets of this age attained the widest blaze of reputation, eclipsing Scott himself, commenced his career. Scott was the popularizer of the Romantic Idea. His happy energy and unfailing spirit carried into the public mind just as much of the new conception of verse as it could realize, and so prepared it for the subtler masters. Just as the cunning and evasive cadences of "*Christabel*" were broadened for the popular ear in the gallant opening of the "*Lay*," so he rendered acceptable a mediævalism which Coleridge and Keats made esoterically mystical and strange, by associating little more than its picturesque externals with the rushing excitement of his story-telling. It is really in the lyrical snatches scattered through his prose and verse stories that Scott reveals himself as most undeniably a poet. If Scott's own genius, indeed, were to be described by any single epithet, it would be called a narrative genius. Hence, when he left off writing verse, he betook himself to the production of fictions in prose, which were really substantially the same thing with his poems, and in that freer form of composition succeeded in achieving a second reputation still more brilliant than his first.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

Byron was the writer whose blaze of popularity it mainly was that threw Scott's name into the shade, and induced him to abandon verse. Yet the productions which had this effect—the *Giaour*, the *Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, &c., published in 1813 and 1814 (for the new idolatry was scarcely kindled by the two cantos of *Childe Harold*, in quite another style, which appeared shortly before these effusions), were, in reality, only poems written in what may be called a variation of Scott's own manner—Oriental lays and romances, Turkish "Marmions" and "Ladies of the Lake." The novelty of scene and subject, the exaggerated tone of passion in the outlandish tales, and a certain glittering rhetoric in the writing, materially aided by the mysterious interest attaching to the personal history of the noble bard, who, whether he sung of Giaours, or Corsairs, or Laras, was always popularly believed to be "himself the great sublime he drew," wonderfully excited and intoxicated the public mind at first, and for a time made all other poetry seem spiritless and wearisome; but, if Byron had adhered to the style by which his fame was thus originally made, it probably would have proved transient enough. Few will now be found to assert that there is anything in these earlier poems of his comparable to the great passages in those of Scott—to the battle in *Marmion*, for instance, or the raising of the clansmen by the fiery cross in the *Lady* *of the Lake.* But Byron's vigorous and elastic genius although it had already tried various styles of poetry, was, in truth, as yet only preluding to its proper display. First, there had been the very small note of the *Hours of Idleness* (1807); then, the sharper, and more promising, strain of the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809); next, the certainly higher and more matured manner of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*; after that, suddenly the false glare and preternatural vehemence of these Oriental rhapsodies, which yet, however, with all their hollowness and extravagance, evinced infinitely more power than anything he had previously done, or rather were the only poetry he had yet produced that gave proof of any remarkable poetic genius. The *Prisoner of Chillon* and *Parisina*, the *Siege of Corinth* and *Mazeppa*, and the mystery plays of *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*, followed, all in a spirit of far more truth, and depth, and beauty than the other tales that had preceded them; but the highest forms of Byron's rhetoric must be sought for in the two concluding cantos of *Childe Harold.* Byron also showed the influence of Goethe in his *Manfred*, and in his drama of *The Deformed Transformed.* Other dramas include *Marino Faliero* and *Sardanapalus.* But the real genius of Byron flashed out cruelly in the *Vision of Judgment*, became more indulgently apparent in *Beppo*, and was finally manifest in the cantos of *Don Juan* (begun 1818), an incomparable medley of wit, pathos, indignation, "criticism of life," and social satire. Byron's share in the Romantic Movement, to which he was by no means consciously friendly, is the unfettered expression of the passion and energy of the individual, the revelation of the Ego in revolt.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

Yet the greatest poetical genius of this time, if it was not that of Coleridge, was, probably, that of Shelley. Byron died in 1824, at the age of thirty-six; Shelley in 1822, at that of twenty-nine. What Shelley produced during the brief term allotted to him on earth, much of it passed in sickness and sorrow, is remarkable for its quantity, but much more wonderful for the quality of the greater part of it. His *Queen Mab* (1813), written when he was eighteen, crude and defective as it is, and unworthy to be classed with what he wrote in his maturer years, was probably the richest promise that was ever given at so early an age of poetic power, the fullest assurance that the writer was born a poet. From the date of his *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude* (1815), the earliest written of the poems published by himself, to his death, was not quite seven years. The *Revolt of Islam* (1817), in twelve cantos, or books, the dramas of *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Cenci* (1819), and *Hellas*, the tale of *Rosalind and Helen*, *The Masque of Anarchy*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *Julian and Maddalo* (1818), *The Witch of Atlas* (1820), *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais* (1821), *The Triumph of Life*, the translations of Homer's *Hymn to Mercury*, of the *Cyclops* of Euripides, and of the scenes from Calderon and from Goethe's *Faust*, besides many short poems, were the additional produce of this springtime of a life destined to know no summer. So much poetry, so rich in various beauty, was probably never poured forth with so rapid a flow from any other mind. Nor can much of it be charged with either immaturity or carelessness: Shelley, with all his abundance and facility, was a fastidious writer, scrupulously attentive to the effect of words and syllables, and accustomed to elaborate whatever he wrote to the utmost; and, although it is not to be doubted that if he had lived longer he would have developed new powers and a still more masterly command over the several resources of his art, anything that can properly be called unripeness in his art had ceased with his *Revolt of Islam*, the first of his poems which he gave to the world, as if the exposure to the public eye had burned it out. Some haziness of thought and uncertainty of expression may be found in some of his later, or even latest, works; but that is not to be confounded with rawness; it is the dreamy ecstasy, too high for speech, in which his poetical nature, most subtle, sensitive, and voluptuous, delighted to dissolve and lose itself. Yet it is marvellous how far he had succeeded in reconciling even this mood of thought with the necessities of distinct expression: witness his *Epipsychidion* (written in the last year of his life), which may be regarded as his crowning triumph in that kind of writing, and as, indeed, for its wealth and fusion of all the highest things—of imagination, of expression, of music,—one of the greatest miracles ever wrought in poetry. In other styles, again, all widely diverse, are the *Cenci*, the *Masque of Anarchy*, the *Hymn to Mercury* (formerly a translation, but essentially almost as much an original composition as any of the others). It is hard to conjecture what would have been impossible to him by whom all this had been done. Shelley's is perhaps the most essential poetry in the language. It is pure enchantment for listeners with a delicate ear for his rarer cadences, and some power of response to his etherealized emotion.

JOHN KEATS (1796–1821)

Keats, born in 1796, died the year before Shelley, and, of course, at a still earlier age. Certainly to no one of his contemporaries had been given more of passionate intensity of conception (the life of poetry) than to Keats. Whatever he thought or felt came to him authentically, and truly possessed him. Whatever he wrote at his best lives. And his most wanton extravagances had for the most part a seed of good in them. His very affectations were mostly prompted by excess of love and reverence. Keats's *Endymion* was published in 1817; his *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *Eve of St. Agnes*, and the great epic fragment, *Hyperion*, together in 1820, a few months before his death. His consummate odes,—*To a Nightingale*, *To a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*, and *To Melancholy* are among the greatest treasures of the language. *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and the *Eve of St. Mark* touch the most delicate strings of romantic wonder. An elaborate music, an exquisite felicity of image and word became only more perfectly his as he wrought. Very few poets have so combined the "simple, sensuous and passionate" elements of verse, with masculine strength of style, as he did in his later poems. As Matthew Arnold has written, "No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness."

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859); LANDOR; MOORE; CAMPBELL; HOGG; ROGERS

These last names can hardly be mentioned without suggesting another. Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley and Keats, had attracted the attention of the world by much that he had done, both in verse and prose, long before the appearance of either. His *Story of Rimini*, published in 1816, had given him a place of his own. As a lover of Elizabethan matters he affected greater poets than himself, luring them also to his favourite predecessors and their devices of style.

Leigh Hunt died, at the age of seventy-five, in 1859,—the last survivor, although the earliest born, of the four poets, with the other three of whom he had been so intimately associated, and the living memory of whom he thus carried far into another time, indeed across an entire succeeding generation. To the last, even in outward form, he forcibly recalled Shelley's fine picture of him in his *Elegy on Keats*, written nearly forty years before.

Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864) was the master of a stately Roman style in verse, just faintly flushed with the Romantic grace. *Gebir* (1798), a kind of epic, and *Count Julian*, a tragedy, are somewhat cold and stiff, though the former has beautiful passages. *The Hellenics*, however, present the characteristic Landor union of severity and grace. His brief poems, haughty, concise, and tender, are often impeccable things: once at least he found the perfection of pathos in *Rose Aylmer*.

Thomas Moore (1779–1852) gained a dazzling popularity for his rather tawdry Oriental wares called *Lalla Rookh* (1817), though the *Irish Melodies* (1807), with their easy cadenzas and sweet sentimentality are more inseparably associated with his name. He translated *Anacreon* also. Some witty political verse, *The Twopenny Postbag* (1812) and *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), also stands to the credit of this versatile and amusing friend of Byron, whose biography he wrote. *The Loves of the Angels* (1823) is weak and florid, but his songs will probably preserve his name. Their appeal is simple and sentimental, but they are extremely good of their kind.

Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) wrote long narrative poems, such as *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), *Theodoric* (1824), and *The Pilgrim of Glencoe* (1842). These have lost their popularity; but Campbell's vigorous martial lyrics, rhetorical but impassioned, such as *Hohenlinden*, *The Battle of the Baltic*, *Ye Mariners of England*, and *Lochiel*, will not readily perish.

James Hogg (1770–1835), a Scottish shepherd and sheep-farmer, called himself "King of the Mountain and Fairy School of Poetry." He wrote some ringing songs, and the narrative poem of *Kilmeny* is extremely tender and thrilling in parts; but his long poems like *The Queen's Wake* (1813), and more ambitious attempts like *The Pilgrims of the Sun*, have now no vitality.

Samuel Rogers (1765–1855) was a curious connecting-link between the periods. His best-known poems are *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792) and *Italy* (1822). They are quite in the eighteenth-century manner, though the latter shows some sense of the change of poetic temper in its subject-matter. He was a centre of literary society in the later part of his life.

Among the minor poets of the time mention should be made of Scottish song-writers like Tannahill, Cunningham, and Motherwell; of the fluent Barry Cornwall, the earnest Anti-Corn-Law Rhymer, Ebenezer Elliott; and the extremely sentimental and easily melodious Felicia Hemans, and Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

NOVELISTS.—SCOTT; JANE AUSTEN

After its magnificent beginnings the English novel had somewhat languished, when Scott, finding his poetic vein rather exhausted, and conscious of the Byronic triumph, accidentally lighted on the abandoned fragment of *Waverley*, completed it, and charged prose-fiction with unforeseen energies in combining the historical interest with his story-telling charm and his inexhaustible power of creating character. It achieved instant success (1814), and its immediate successors, *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), probably reveal Scott's powers at their most assured and triumphal period. *The Black Dwarf* (1816) was weaker, but *Rob Roy* (1817) was splendidly successful in its vivid complication of interests and its unusually vivacious heroine. *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) sounded human pathos even more deeply, and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) perhaps touches Scott's highest achievement in tragic terror. *A Legend of Montrose* (1819) contains an incomparable study of a soldier of fortune. *Ivanhoe* (1819), more definitely a romance, carried the historical interest into a fascinating period. *The Monastery* and *The Abbot* deal with the fortunes of Queen Mary, the latter very brilliantly. *Kenilworth* (1821) set in the centre of a moving story a most convincing study of her great rival. *The Pirate* (1821) took the imagination to the Shetland Isles. *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) contains an admirable presentation of James I.; *Peveril of the Peak* is a less happy study of the time of Charles II. There quickly followed *Quentin Durward*, one of his finest historical romances, *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Redgauntlet*, the last of the Jacobite novels. *The Talisman* (1825) still shows unflagging zest; *The Betrothed* (1825) is weaker. The collapse of his fortunes, and his preoccupation with *The Life of Napoleon*, now affected and made more anxious his work in fiction. Yet *Woodstock* (1827) and *The Fair Maid of Perth* show all his strongest qualities in full play. Some of the *Chronicles of the Canongate* are perfect; but *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris*, *Castle Dangerous*, and *The*

Surgeon's Daughter reveal the sorrowful process of physical exhaustion.

In creating the historical novel Scott gave a vivid impulse to fiction. He could complicate the progress of the individual romantic story with the march of great events in a masterly manner. He also had a strong sense of objective things, so the folk of fiction no longer moved about in worlds not half realized, but walked substantially in an environment of time and place with which they were vitally connected. The extraordinary variety of these characters, ranging from the perfect studies of royal personages like Louis XI. to those of sorrowful outcasts like Madge Wildfire, cannot be adequately suggested here. Neither can the skilfully-involved humour and pathos of his treatment of human life, delicately restrained as these great qualities are, for Scott had a well-bred horror of sentimental debauches. All these matters he expressed in a style which was occasionally lax and hasty, but which could at times reveal qualities of great beauty and graciousness.

JANE AUSTEN (1775–1817)

Jane Austen, a rector's daughter, who passed all her life in the towns and villages of the South of England, applied to fiction a genius as exquisite as Scott's was fertile, and made the delicate analysis of everyday life as absorbing in interest as the historical romance. *Northanger Abbey* (accepted in 1797, though not published till after her death) was a kind of parody of the novel of mystery, a study of life at Bath, filled in with her ridiculous and delightful people. *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), her masterpiece, *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* (1818) form a series of close and subtle analyses of provincial life and manners, written in a style of serene irony and delicate detachment which yields one of the keenest and rarest flavours in English fiction.

OTHER NOVELISTS

Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849), besides composing her well-known didactic stories for children, did some lively novels of Irish life and manners, like *Castle Rackrent* (1801), *Belinda* (1803), *The Absentee*, *Ormond and Helen* (1834). Susan Ferrier infused into her badly-constructed but amusing stories, *Marriage*, *The Inheritance*, and *Destiny*, much mirth and frank characterization of a peculiarly Scottish kind. John Galt (1779–

1839) lifted the doings of small Scottish parishes into the realms of humour in books like *The Annals of the Parish*, *The Entail*, and *The Provost*; and fairly began a new school.

William Harrison Ainsworth and George Payne Rainsford James did some very popular work in a pseudo-historical kind of romance now discredited. Benjamin Disraeli (1804) really introduced a variety of new elements into the subject-matter of fiction,—political and personal interests, and the play of contemporary criticism of the life of the period,—in books like *Henrietta Temple*, *Venetia*, *Coningsby* (1844), *Lothair* (1870). Lord Lytton (1803–1873) began with a great success as the novelist of fashion in *Pelham*. His melodramatic *Last Days of Pompeii* showed him in another vein, and *The Caxtons* in yet another. He was a fertile and adaptive writer, and wrote one or two admirable short stories.

The novels of Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866), *Headlong Hall*, *Melincourt*, *Nightmare Abbey*, *Maid Marian*, *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, *Crochet Castle*, and *Gryll Grange*, will always rank among the esoteric pleasures of a small but highly-trained audience. Most of them describe the interaction of a group of odd and amusing characters, some of them parodied from life, with great gaiety and a peculiar pungency of wit. Peacock wrote some distinguished verse; and his drinking songs are superb.

Leigh Hunt, Lockhart, the boisterous but amusing Lever, Marryat and Michael Scott ought to be named even in the most rapid summary of the novels of the period.

THE ESSAYISTS

The remarkable development of the magazine now greatly encouraged the writers of miscellaneous prose, more especially the essayists.

The supreme essayist of the period,—the supreme essayist in English literature is Charles Lamb (1775–1834), who passed most of his life as a clerk in the East India House, and in its pensioned retirement. Lamb wrote some tender verse, and *John Woodvil*, a tragedy in the Elizabethan manner; along with his sister he composed *Tales from Shakspere*, and he also made an anthology from the Elizabethan drama, which he enriched with critical comments of the most illuminating power. But as a contributor to the *London Magazine* he evolved the *Essays of Elia*, incomparable meditations, reveries, fantasies, on the accidents and essentials of life and death.

There the tenderness, pathos, and ineffable elvish humour of one of the most lovable personalities in literature find an expression steeped in rich allusiveness, quaint with freaks that show his descent from Browne and Burton, startling with sudden childlike felicities, and sweet with sighing cadences. There is no more indescribable book in literature.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830) was a more robust and aggressive personality. Yet he had rare critical insight when he could forget his prejudices, a great sense of the joy of living, and an English style of masculine vigour and zest. *Winterslow*, and the other volumes of his collected essays contain a rich body of criticism of both life and literature.

Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859) evolved a singularly gorgeous and majestic prose style in the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), in his *Autobiography*, and in other parts of his vast miscellaneous writing. There are deserts of desultory prose in De Quincey's work; but his master-passages, like the Dreams in the *Opium-Eater*, and the *Ladies of Sorrow*, are like great symphonies in their vision, their intensity of emotion and their involutions of verbal music.

Landor must also be named again among the prose-writers, for his *Imaginary Conversations* (1831), with the *Pericles and Aspasia* and the *Pentameron*, wrought out a style of dignified and chastened splendour like that of a worker in metals.

Thomas Babbington Macaulay (1800–1859), in a series of remarkable essays and speeches, and in a grandiose fragment of a *History of England*, made for himself one of the most unmistakable styles in literature. Macaulay had the mind of a lawyer and of an orator, it was his passionate desire to clarify, to emphasize, to persuade, to convince. Hence he deals with literature and history like an advocate, constantly finding matter for debate, constantly marshalling the pros and cons, and finally summing up the case, for he is usually both advocate and judge. But he can unravel entangled historical events with ingenuity and perfection, and his untiring picturesqueness visualizes the scene. The peculiar mechanism of his style,—his balanced antithesis, his modes of transition, his alternations of sentence-length, his parallel-construction, his oratorical paragraph-building,—is easy and obvious to study, but was not so obvious to invent. And it must not be forgotten that Macaulay has passages of admirable rhetoric, though he never penetrates to what lies behind rhetoric.

Christopher North's (Professor Wilson) chaotic and dithyrambic productions, John Lockhart's masterly *Life of Scott*, one of the two greatest biographies in the English language; Leigh Hunt's pleasant essays, also the prose of historians like Hallam, Grote, Milman, and of philosophers like Bentham and Mill, must at least be mentioned here.

VICTORIAN LITERATURE

MINOR POETS: HOOD; PRAED; HARTLEY COLERIDGE, ETC.

THE earlier part of the Victorian era was a little weak in poetry, as if the great Romantic outbreak had temporarily exhausted its force. Thomas Hood (1798–1845), in the course of a hard life necessarily devoted to journalism and comic hackwork, made some charming and delicate serious verse, less rhetorical than the justly famous *Bridge of Sighs* and the *Song of the Shirt.* Romantic poems like *Fair Ines* show what gracious qualities his genius possessed. Winthrop Mackworth Praed wrote amusing and debonair society verse, and a few fine poems in other kinds. Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) retain their force as really splendid specimens of rhetorical verse. Robert Stephen Hawker (1803–1875), an eccentric clergyman in Cornwall, had a strange and curious romantic power, expressed in poems like *The Quest of the Sangreal.* Hartley Coleridge (1796–1849) was an admirable sonnet-writer. Sir Henry Taylor, author of *Philip van Artevelde*; Richard Hengist Horne, of *Orion* fame; George Darley, a most melodious lyrist, are all interesting personalities in verse. Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849) was a singular and original dreamer of dark dreams. His plays are wild and curious imitations of Elizabethan tragedy; but his lyrics are unique in character, and have a mysterious and unearthly effect in their lines.

ALFRED TENNYSON

The first great group of Victorian writers includes Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold. Of these the first two usually oppose each other in the popular mind. Diverse in much, they have nevertheless also much in common. They are both of them profound and subtle thinkers as well as richly endowed with the faculty of poetry; thinkers, and also workers; and so each has made himself a consummate artist in addition to whatever he might otherwise have been of a great poet. Tennyson won to himself the personal attachment of his countrymen in a degree that has been rarely equalled in the history of literature. His poetry charmed all hearts by something more than its artistic qualities, for it is as full of humanity as of beauty. His verse, whether tender or lofty, whether light-hearted or sad, was closely in touch, too, with the desires and emotions of his own day. Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892) made his first appearance in the little volume called *Poems by Two Brothers* (1826). Another collection of poems appeared in 1830. In 1832 a third volume, containing *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Palace of Art*, and *The Dream of Fair Women*, and *Œnone* revealed the perfect Tennysonian gift of dissolving picture in music. *English Idylls and Other Poems* (1842) held such perfect work as the *Morte d'Arthur* and *Ulysses*. *The Princess* (1847) is set with most delectable songs. *In Memoriam* (1850) is one of the great elegies of the language. *Maud* (1855) is weak and violent in parts, but contains passages of his most thrilling lyrical sweetness. *The Idylls of the King* (1859), a rendering of the Arthurian legend, established Tennyson in popular favour. Among succeeding volumes were *Enoch Arden* (1864), *Ballads and Other Poems* (1880), and *The Death of Œnone* (1892). In Tennyson's verse we find resumed many of the characteristic qualities of the poets of the Romantic period—qualities weakened a little in intensity, but gaining from their interaction with each other, with classical influences, and with his own peculiar poetic temper, a final effect of harmonious and serene perfection.

ROBERT BROWNING AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Robert Browning (1812–1889) began his poetic work with *Pauline* (1835). *Paracelsus*, a kind of lyric drama, appeared in 1835. The play of *Strafford* (1837) led on to the poem of *Sordello*, once famous for its supposed obscurity. *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841–1846) expressed all the richer and finer qualities of Browning's manner. After his marriage with Elizabeth Barrett he published *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*; in 1855 *Men and Women*, one of his greatest volumes. In 1864 *Dramatis Personæ* appeared. But *The Ring and the Book* (1868) was a tremendous attack on the British public, which at last gave way, and the Browning cult began. In this vast work the same Italian story of crime is repeated again and again by the different actors in the plot, until the entire psychological truth is revealed. The poet seemed to avenge himself for his long neglect in works like *Red Cotton Nightcap Country* (1873). The list of his further publications covers *The Inn Album*, *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Aristophanes' Apology*, *Prince*

Hohenstiel-Schwangau, *La Saisiaz*, *Dramatic Idylls*, *Ferishtah's Fancies*, *Parleyings with certain People of Importance*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*, *Pacchiarotto*, *Jocoseira*, and *Asolando* (1889). Browning's *Paracelsus*, published when he was only three-and-twenty, was remarkable for the depth and completeness of the conception. And everything that he produced after, even when departing furthest from established models, has been elaborated and finished with the same masterly skill. But, although he too has now made himself a great name, he has never attained, and is not likely ever to attain, the universal popularity of Tennyson, the general admiration at once of the few and of the many. Much of Browning's poetry, considered simply as poetry, is certainly, both in the soul of passionate vision that animates it and in expressiveness of form, as striking as anything that was produced in his own day. He is still complained of as difficult to understand; and no doubt the train of thought is sometimes remote and subtle, and the language wrought to a corresponding degree of compression and fineness of edge, doing its work like the knife or like the lightning. Browning's values, both as philosopher and as poet, continue to be passionately debated. It may at once be admitted that a certain part of his work is so mannered as to be wearisome, turbid, and otiose. But he was a great psychologist; he had the dramatic vision, and, at his best period, his own kind of thought, his own kind of music, and, a very original and potent quality, his own kind of heroic and intellectualized passion. Browning, however, is so great a master of words that there is nothing he cannot make them do for him, no manner of using them in which he is not at home. It is natural to place after Browning the name of his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861). She published *Prometheus Bound and Other Poems* so early as 1835; *Romaunt of the Page* (1839), *The Seraphim and Other Poems* (1844), *Casa Guidi Windows* (1848), *Aurora Leigh* (1856), *Poems before Congress* (1860). *Last Poems* appeared in 1862. It is difficult to pardon some of the defects of Elizabeth Browning's poetic style. Her offences against the legitimate art of words and rhymes are innumerable, and her emotion is apt to become sentimental. But she had passion, sincerity, imagination, and a real sense of verbal music. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* belong to the great love-poetry of the world; and certain of her lyrics, quickened by an ecstasy of pity or tenderness, are surely immortal.

TABLE OF LATER AUTHORS

Other Victorian Poets.—Edward Fitzgerald ; Matthew Arnold ; Clough, etc.

Edward Fitzgerald (1809–1883), besides other translations and a prose dialogue called *Euphranor*, published in 1859 a version of the *Rubáiyát* of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyám Fitzgerald's work is in no sense a mere translation, and it has had a very marked effect on English verse. The melancholy of fatalism has never been more finely expressed than in the formal music of these memorable quatrains.

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), the eldest son of the famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby, published in 1849 *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems by A.*; in 1852 *Empedocles on Etna and other Poems*, then *Poems, First Series*, 1853 ; *Poems, Second Series*, 1855. *Merope*, a tragedy, appeared in 1858, and *New Poems*, in 1867. Arnold is a most unequal poet, but when his mind and imagination are in perfect unison, he is not less than Tennyson or Browning,—seems to reach, indeed, to some minds, a severity of intellectual beauty tempered with a restrained sweetness which is as satisfying as anything his compeers can give. *The Scholar Gipsy*, *Thyrsis*, *Requiescat*, *Dover Beach*, *The Forsaken Merman*, and some of the solemn blank verse of *Sohrab and Rustum*, are moulded into perfect form by a singularly noble and exquisite kind of poetic passion.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861), in some ways a variant of Arnold, expressed the restless doubt and intellectual weariness of his time. The *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* appeared in 1848 ; *Ambarvali*, a collection of shorter poems, in 1849. *Dipsychus* and *Amours de Voyage* are intimate studies of the sceptical temper ; but Clough is most completely a poet in clear sad-toned lyrics like *Say not the Struggle nought availeth*, and *The Hidden Love*.

Philip Bailey's *Festus*, Sydney Dobell's *Balder*, Alexander Smith's *Life-Drama* are survivals of the once interesting "Spasmodic" school, which made a rather vague effort to escape from the cloying Tennysonian sweetness and calm by a greater agitation of thought and more liberty of form. Philip James Bailey (1816–1902) published the first version of his *Festus* in 1839. This re-modelling of the Faust conception is naturally extremely immature and violent; yet it possesses imaginative reach, and its earnest optimism made it very popular at the time of publication. The author's mistake in overloading it with quantities of later poetic matter has sunk it in a somewhat unjust oblivion. Alexander Smith (1830–1867), obtained a great success with his *Life-Drama* (1853), which contained some stormy but vigorous "criticism of life." *City Poems*, appeared in 1857; *Edwin of Deira*, 1861. His prose works include a volume of pleasing essays, *Dream Thorp* (1863), *A Summer in Skye* (1865), and *Alfred Hagart's Household* (1866). Sydney Dobell (1824–1874), the most interesting of the group, published *The Roman* (1850), *Balder* (1854), *Sonnets on the War* (1855), (along with Alexander Smith), and *England in Time of War* (1856). *Balder*, another rather amorphous and obscure presentment of the conflict of the human mind with the problem of the universe, is yet interpenetrated with a real lyrical force, and contains passages of much emotional intensity and surprisingly original imagery. But, perhaps, Dobell's name will live longest as that of the author of the haunting ballad *Keith of Ravelston.*

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

But the famous "Pre-Raphaelite" group of poets achieved this escape with amazing artistic results by a reversion to the subtler qualities of the great Romantic poets. A more clear-eyed and impassioned understanding of mediævalism in all the arts, a stranger note of passion, a more difficult music, a more burning colour, wrought out a Neo-Romantic Renaissance of great beauty. The group includes Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Georgina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, in his earlier period.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882), a painter of splendid qualities as well as a poet, early touched his special kind of perfection in *The Blessed Damozel*, written before 1849. His intellectual force and magnetism of character made him the most stimulating and dominating factor in the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in both arts. *Poems* (1870) and *Ballads and Sonnets* (1882), contain romances like *Rose Mary*, historical ballads like *The White Ship*, pictorial fantasies like *Eden Bower*, sombre meditations like the *Burden of Nineveh*, concentrated lyrics like *Love-lily*, mystical movements like *World's Worth*, dramatic studies like *A Last Confession*, and intricate pieces of verbal music like *The Stream's Secret.* The sequence called the

House of Life places him among the great sonnet-masters. Rossetti's translations of Dante's *Vita Nuova* and of many of the lyrics of the Early Italian Poets, collected in the little volume called *Dante and His Circle* (1874), are both faithful to the originals and beautiful in themselves. "A sustained impressibility towards the mysterious conditions of man's everyday life, towards the very mystery itself in it, gives a singular gravity to all his work: those matters never became trite to him. But throughout it is the ideal intensity of love,—of love based upon a perfect yet peculiar type of physical or material beauty which is enthroned in the midst of those mysterious powers. . . . Rossetti is one of those who in the words of Mérimée, se passionnent pour la passion, one of Love's lovers," says Walter Pater. Yet the strangeness and charm of his emotional quality must not make us blind to the "fundamental brainwork" and masculine energy which built up the massive architecture of his decorated style.

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894) is the most artistic and the most original of English women-poets. Her volumes include *Goblin Market and other Poems* (1861), *The Prince's Progress* (1866), *A Pageant and other Poems* (1881). There is also a posthumous volume, and much fine verse is scattered through her prose devotional books. She is one of the finest devotional poets in English; and her love-lyrics are simple and sweet, and have been compared by one critic to "the voices of nightingales."

William Morris (1834–1896), various and indefatigable in art, pressed his poetic progress through enchanting volumes that can only be mentioned here. The *Defence of Guenevere and other Poems* (1858) is a true Pre-Raphaelite volume, in some ways the most powerful he ever produced. The *Life and Death of Jason* (1866) told the ancient story in a more serenely mediæval way, smoothly turned in the heroic couplet. The *Earthly Paradise*, begun 1868, in which Morris challenges comparison with Chaucer as a great poetic story-teller, is a treasury of varied legends enshrined in a dreamy, drowsy setting. *Love is Enough* is a fanciful morality with sumptuous choruses. But the Scandinavian influence was gaining on Morris, and his *Sigurd the Volsung* (1877) is a ringing and noble rendering of the heroic saga. *Poems by the Way* (1891) contained verses in the Socialist note. Morris was also a great master of prose romances, like the *Well at the World's End* (1896).

Although Mr. Swinburne, born 1837, is still a living master, it is well to associate with the work of his early friends his first volumes like the *Queen Mother* and *Rosamund*, *Chastelard*, the entirely individual *Atalanta in Calydon*, and especially the famous *Poems and Ballads.*

OTHER VICTORIAN POETS.—ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY; COVENTRY PATMORE; JAMES THOMSON, ETC.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844–1881) evoked an intangible, but sweet and original kind of lyric in volumes like the *Epic of Women*, and *Music and Moonlight.* Coventry Patmore (1823–1896) passed from the curiously mingled *Angel in the House*, to the daring mysticism of the *Unknown Eros.* James Thomson (1834–1882) is the author of one of the great poems of melancholia: *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874). William Cory's *Ionica*, has a wistful late-Greek kind of charm. Lord de Tabley had some quality. Frederick Locker Lampson (1821–1895), Charles Stuart Calverley, and Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) (1832–1898), did very enjoyable things in the lighter and more irresponsible realms of verse. George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, and especially Emily Brontë added many memorable things to the treasury of English poetry.

THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

The Victorian Novel is too vast a subject to be treated in an appendix. Dickens and Thackeray dominate its earliest years, as Meredith and Hardy its later.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870), after a youth of hard struggle won some popular recognition by *Sketches by Boz* (1836), and popular fame by the *Pickwick Papers* (1836). Fortune dwelt steadily with him through the long series of his works *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–1841), *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *American Notes* (1842), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), different Christmas books, *Pictures from Italy* (1845), *Dombey and Son* (1846–1848), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850), *Bleak House* (1852–1853), *The Child's History of England* (1854), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1855–1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1861), *Great Expectations* (1861), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865), and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which was left unfinished.

In the fantastic world of a Dickens novel there is no unity of plot, or settled vision of life. Yet the illusion of reality is perfect while the atmosphere of the book possesses the mind. Dickens had a great creative imagination,—of the grotesque and robust kind certainly; and he could make both places and people apparent with extraordinary power. His pathos is often unbearable: his humour is inexhaustible and irresistible; his comprehension of life in its greater aspects hardly exists at all. The long array of his merry, sinister, or absurd people, whether they be the figments of the selecting and caricaturing imagination or not, has become part of the national remembrance. Mr. Pickwick, Sarah Gamp, Captain Cuttle, Mr. Pecksniff, Mr. Micawber, Peggotty, Uriah Heep,—even very minor characters like Uncle Pumblechook and Mr. F.'s Aunt will not easily be relinquished by the imagination.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863), after studying painting, and working to some degree at journalism, made in work like *The Paris Sketch-book* (1840), and the *Yellowplush Papers* (1841), some of his first attempts to work out his caustic and piercing criticism of life. Stories like *Catherine*, *The Shabby-Genteel Story*, and *Barry Lyndon*, show the gradual evolution of that highly personal style, which at last captured attention in the *Book of Snobs* (1848), and the master-novel of *Vanity Fair* (1848). *The English Humourists*, and *The Four Georges* were acute and brilliant volumes of essays. *Pendennis* (1849–1850), *Esmond* (1852), a perfect piece of eighteenth-century romance and character-study. *The Newcomes* (1853–1855), the delightful absurdity of the *Rose and the Ring*, the *Virginians* (1854–1855), the *Roundabout Papers*, *Lovel the Widower*, the *Adventures of Philip*, and the incomplete *Denis Duval* confirmed his high place among our greatest essayists and novelists.

Unlike Dickens, Thackeray had a definite attitude to life, an attitude distinctly ironical yet as distinctly tender, a little tired, a little wistful, in which much real pessimism was made light and valorous by a sense of humour. Thackeray's people are instinct with that humanity which he at once satirizes and pities; and the style in which he reveals the secrets of their personalities is as nimble and expressive, as varying and sympathetic as his own emotional temper. Though Ruskin might complain in *Fors Clavigera* that "Thackeray settled like a meat-fly on whatever one had for dinner and made one sick of it," there is more truth in Stevenson's appreciation,—"Whether because he was himself a gentleman in a very high degree, or because his methods were in a very high degree suited to this class of work . . . a gentleman came from his pen by the gift of nature," and in his further declaration concerning Colonel Newcome: "If the art of being a gentleman were forgotten, like the art of staining glass, it might be learned anew from that one character."

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1854) and her sister Emily, shut off from experience in the cloister of a parsonage on a Yorkshire moor, yet saw life and evolved their startling stories, and created anew the novel of nature and passion. The former, in *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1852), blended her own personal experiences with a deep romantic passion, with a result at once vivid and feminine. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is a book by itself,—hardly a novel, rather a lyric tragedy of the wild moors and the wilder passions.

Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853), a very humorous and tender presentation of the lives of provincial old ladies; and Charles Reade's elaborate historical romance *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861) present only one phase of the varied work of these talented authors.

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) (1819–1880), though not so extravagantly praised now as when her novels first appeared, retains a secure place among English novelists of the social order. Her works of fiction include *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857), *Adam Bede* (1858), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Romola* (1863), *Felix Holt* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Most of these are carefully built out of personal experience and observation. The psychology often seems coldly and imperfectly understood, and the didactic purpose is frequently too apparent. Yet she could create warm and palpitating human beings; her pathos does not sin by excess; and she has a keen though rather uncertain sense of humour. Perhaps her finest works are *Middlemarch* and *The Mill on the Floss*. The former groups a surprising number of varied and lifelike people, Dr. Casaubon, Dorothea, Rosamond Vincy, Lydgate, Mary Garth, Bulstrode,—even though, as her acute biographer, Mr. Leslie Stephen, remarks, "she seems to speak from a standpoint of philosophic detachment which somehow exhibits her characters in a rather distorted light." *The Mill on the Floss*, again, has much of the burning human interest of autobiography; but all her best writing is steeped in this interest. Mr. Stephen thinks we can best comprehend her work by regarding it as "implicit autobiography," as the observation of a personality that combined "an exquisitely sympathetic and loving nature with a large and tolerant intellect."

Charles Kingsley's enthusiastic novels of social life, like *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, are brilliantly if somewhat noisily written; but his great achievement is the crowded and adventurous Elizabethan romance of *Westward Ho!* (1854). His brother Henry did his best in the attractive story of *Ravenshoe* (1862). Wilkie Collins was a most skilful craftsman in the mystery-novel, of which *The Moonstone* (1868) is a well-known example. Anthony Trollope's (1815–1882) quiet but sure delineation of provincial life is perhaps at its highest in *Barchester Towers*. Mrs. Proudie is an admirable creation. *Dr. Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), and the *Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), belong to the same series. Trollope thus describes one of his own novels: "The story was thoroughly English. There was a little fox-hunting and a little tuft-hunting, some Christian virtue and some Christian cant. There was no heroism and no villainy. There was much church, but more love-making. And it was downright honest love." Mrs. Oliphant also showed a wonderfully fertile talent of a kindred nature in books like *The Chronicles of Carlingford*.

The delightful fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) must also now be counted with the literature of last century. *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey through the Cevennes* (1879) early showed his humour and grace of style. He attained popularity with *Treasure Island* (1882), *Kidnapped* (1886), *Catriona* (1893), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889); and short stories like *A Lodging for a Night* and *Will o' the Mill* all helped to increase his fame. His volumes of essays, *Virginibus Pueresque* (1881), *Familiar Studies in Men and Books* (1882), and *Memories and Portraits* show powers in that kind which are quite as rare, while *A Child's Garden of Verse* has a charm for both childhood and age.

HISTORIANS AND CRITICS

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) presented his stormy gospel in a prose of extreme force and eccentricity which bears at times a prophetic strain. *The Life of Schiller* (1825) was quiet in tone; but *Sartor Resartus* expressed the author's mystical fantasy and philosophy of modern life in true Carlylese. *The History of the French Revolution* (1837) surprised by a new mode of relating past things, with patient fulness of research, but almost in terms of imaginative art. *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) presented with conviction one of the author's favourite themes. *Past and Present* (1843) and the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845) resume the historic method of the French Revolution with a difference. To quote a recent critic of the latter work,—considered "as a portrayal of a great subject, Carlyle's *Cromwell* is a marvel of interpretative insight and of expressive power. No work of equal force, whether in magnetic intuition, in conception, or in lurid grandeur of execution, has ever been devoted to any period of English history, or in all probability ever will be. Nor is this the final word. It was surely a beneficent angel which led Carlyle to throw overboard the idea of a general history of the period and to restrict himself to the life-size portrayal of its grand central figure. No merely synoptic writing, whether of Carlyle's or of any other author, could have produced in the mind of the reader the effect produced by the written word and the spoken speech of Cromwell himself. With or without his will, and possibly even without his being aware of it—such is the superb art of the book—the reader is reading, not the words of a latter-day historian, not a tale that is told, but the living, spoken word of the protagonist in that mighty conflict. What other book has ever thus re-vivified the dry bones of historical material." *Latter Day Pamphlets* (1850) and the serene *Life of John Sterling* appeared before he began his colossal *History of Frederick the Great* (finished in 1865). The Carlylean philosophy may seem to some a vain thing; but it certainly made great gifts of enthusiasm and heroic stimulus to its generation.

James Anthony Froude (1818–1894) was for some time, like his brothers, under the influence of Newman at Oxford, during which period he published his orthodox *Life of St. Ninian.* But his sceptical and destructive personality asserted itself in the *Nemesis of Faith* (1848). In the time of confusion that followed he found a new philosophy of life in the Carlylean ideals. The series of papers collected afterwards as *Short Studies in Great Subjects*, highly suggestive and gracefully written essays on widely varied themes, are Carlylean in their attitude; and the famous *History of England from the Fall oj Cardinal Wolsey to the Spanish Armada*, the first instalment of which was published in 1856, also presents Henry VIII. in the temper of the historian of Frederick the Great. *The English in Ireland* (1871–1874) is again highly controversial in its motive.

Cæsar: a Sketch (1879) vigorously delineates the subject as the forcible controller of his period. But Froude's partisan spirit had already raised bitter scrutiny of his accuracy; a scrutiny that became still more unfriendly over his work as editor of Carlyle's *Reminiscences.* His *Biography of Carlyle* (1882–1884) raised fierce controversy; but, whether it be or be not mistaken in certain matters, it is undeniably a living and absorbing presentation of character. Among his later books were *Oceana* (1886), *The Life and Letters of Erasmus* (1894), *Elizabethan Seamen of the Sixteenth Century* (1895), and *Lectures on the Council of Trent* (1896). Froude's dramatic conception of history has been somewhat discredited by the school of patient research that includes men like Stubbs and Gardiner; but his vivid style gives his work an enduring interest.

One of Froude's keenest critics and rivals was Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–1892), a very prolific historian. He wrote in a scholarly spirit, but remained obstinately opposed to the new principles of history that were gaining acceptance in his old age, so that his attitude to the past is at times reactionary. His page, however, is always animated and vigorous. His best-known books are *The History of Federal Government* (1863), *History of the Norman Conquest* (1867–1879), *Historical Geography of Europe* (1881–1882), *Reign of William Rufus* (1882), *History of Sicily* (1891–1892).

John Richard Green (1837–1883) brought out in 1874 a remarkable *Short History of the English People.* This freshly conceived and lucid narrative threw the emphasis on the "people" of England, and repudiated the history that is preoccupied with battles and kings. *The History of the English People* was an expansion of this volume. The *Conquest of England* was a posthumous work.

Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862) in his notable *History of Civilization in England* (1857–1861) showed a strong desire to discover causes and to elucidate laws in the study of historical events,—a sociological attitude of mind, in short.

Walter Bagehot (1826–1877) wrote *The English Constitution*, an able and interesting work in which he applied the conception of evolution to the development of the nation. John Lothrop Motley (1814–1877) composed a valuable *History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856).

Alexander Kinglake (1811–1891) wrote a vivacious but disproportionate and prejudiced *History of the Invasion of the Crimea* (1863–1887), an account based chiefly upon the papers of Lord Raglan. His brilliant but metallic style finds better expression in the travel-book *Eothen* (1844).

There remains a group of Victorian masters of prose style whose individual modes of expression are so important and so far-reaching that they cannot be even indicated in this brief summary. Matthew Arnold, in his *Essays in Criticism* (1865 and 1888), *On Translating Homer*, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, *Mixed Essays* (1879), almost set a new standard in prose, and brought the illumination of French culture and the French habit of mind to English criticism. They were written in a pure and graceful style of great charm. Arnold also wrote much and characteristically on theological subjects.

John Ruskin, born in 1819, made the orchestrated periods and the moral enthusiasm of his prose style the vehicle of a gospel of art which, like Arnold's sceptical irony, acted powerfully on Victorian Philistinism. His great book, *Modern Painters* (1843), primarily intended as a defence of Turner, ranged over the philosophy of art in general. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *Stones of Venice* (1851–1853), *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, *The Ethics of the Dust*, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), *The Queen of the Air* (1869), *Unto this Last* (1862), *The Two Paths*, *The Eagle's Nest* (1872) are among the volumes in which he poured out his conceptions of art and life. From 1871 to 1884 he issued a kind of autobiography called *Fors Clavigera*. With all his prejudice and mistake Ruskin was a great force against utilitarianism and materialism; and his prose at its highest moment attains an unsurpassable eloquence.

A more subtle thinker and initiate in the philosophy of art was Walter Horatio Pater (1839–1894). *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) suggested a new interpretation of life according to the æsthetic values. *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) is an analysis of the spiritual history of a Roman youth in the second century. *Appreciations* and *Miscellaneous Essays* contain diverse and deliberate meditations on art and artists, patiently searching out the essential secrets. *Greek Studies* applies the same method to classical subjects. *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) is a series of four historical studies, of extreme beauty in psychology and expression. *Plato and Platonism* appeared in 1893, and the incomplete *Gaston De La Tour* was to afford an Early Renaissance counterpart to *Marius*.

John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) wrote numerous volumes of essays, some verse, and the *History of the Renais-*

sance in Italy. He was an enthusiastic, versatile scholar, but his writing though brilliant and interesting never quite reached the stage of final perfection. Mark Pattison (1813–1884) enters literature with his study of *Milton* (1879), and his *Essays* (1889). Richard Jefferies (1848–1887), author of *The Gamekeeper at Home* (1878), *Woods Magic* (1881), *The Open Air* (1885), *Bevis* (1882), *The Story of my Heart* (1883), and other prose nature-studies, wrote in a very individual and imaginative style his new vision of the wild life and the beauty of England.

The clear, gracious, subdued beauty of Cardinal John Henry Newman's (1801–1890) manner and the delicate irony of his temper, brought religious controversy into literature with the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), and the *Grammar of Assent* (1870). The *Sermons addressed to Mixed Congregations* (1849), and the *Sermons on Various Occasions* (1857), contain much serene and harmonious prose. Newman is also a novelist in *Loss and Gain* and *Callista*, a poet of a high order in the *Dream of Gerontius*.

The unique work of George Borrow (1803–1881) adds another flavour to Victorian literature. *The Gipsies in Spain* (1840), *The Bible in Spain* (1843), *Lavengro* (1851), and *The Romany Rye* (1857), and later on *Wild Wales*, are all more or less decorated autobiography. But these whimsical narratives are as charming for their digressive and unreasonable subject-matter as for the strong rich savour of their English style.

Other works that do not belong to literature in the first intention, but yet are in their way characteristic of Victorian prose are the *Essay on Liberty*, the *Essay on Utilitarianism*, and especially the *Autobiography* of John Stuart Mill (1806–1872), *The Origin of Species* (1859) of Charles Darwin (1809–1882), the miscellaneous scientific essays of Thomas N. Huxley (1825–1895), *The Old Red Sandstone* of Hugh Miller (1802–1856).

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